Types of Adolescent Fears

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Abstract: Fear is a natural and useful companion throughout life. The study attempts to identify the fears of 15-year-olds. Fear of losing someone, fear of someone/something is the top category, followed by fear of death and worry about friends and family. Common fears come in second place, represented by fear of failure and fear of the future. The third largest category is the category of school-related fears. Differences in the emergence of fear are discussed depending on gender and developmental stage.

Keywords: fear, adolescence, gender, ELSPAC.

INTRODUCTION

The feeling of fear is very complex to develop throughout life. Tracing the developmental trajectory of this basic emotion has been a challenge for researchers over the years. The value of research projects focusing on normative fear in childhood and adolescence lies in its ability to provide information on developmental relationships, frequency, intensity, and progression, among others. The duration of these feelings and then they give the definition of pathological fears and phobias against this background. Many factors simultaneously affect the experience of fear. Heredity is influenced by the environment already in the perinatal period. After birth, the direct influence of the family, and then the wider social environment, begins to increase. In general, from a developmental perspective, the interaction of innate predispositions and environment influences how we experience fear, how we process it, and why we suppress some that are irrelevant to the development of fear. 'determines our support for specific sources of fear. in an individual context. Throughout life, fear takes different forms, specific forms of fear are associated with certain periods of development. Here we are talking about developmental fears, with a sequence of specific forms and content of fears related to the contradiction of the individual with the developmental tasks characteristic of a certain stage of development. is described. Despite the above-mentioned universality in the distribution and forms of these fears, it should be remembered that there is individual variability in the ways of expressing and dealing with them, resulting from the unique life circumstances of each person. Emotional development during adolescence, in the course of which the fears related to the above-mentioned development appear, is known to be distinguished by one main feature; Adolescents experience significant life changes and events in many areas of their lives with an unusual degree of independence from their immediate environment that has never been experienced before and is being experienced for the first time. The accumulation of developmental changes experienced by the adolescent (in the somatic domain, as well as in the development of cognitive abilities and in the domain of close interpersonal relationships, although in a broader social context) is reflected in the emotional experience and behavior of adolescents. Historically, adolescence was primarily associated with phenomena related to the emotional life of adolescents - heightened emotions, their high lability, rapid mood swings, and this emotion 'their predominantly negative valence. The increase in conflict between adolescents and their parents and the negative feelings

associated with these conflicts have recently been challenged as a normal accompaniment of adolescence. However, studies focusing on the daily emotional experiences of adolescents show that this period differs from the previous and later developmental stages in the dimensions of intensity, frequency and stability of emotions. in terms of increase and intensity. Due to many biological, psychological and social changes, adolescence is characterized by many unique insecurities and doubts, which contribute to the development of the age-specific content of fear. Much of this research has been conducted using fear questionnaires. The Fear Study Schedule for Children - Revised has become the most widely used method for assessing developmental changes in fear. Fear of physical danger and punishment decreased with age, while social fear (fear of evaluation) increased with age. These results were consistent with research that focused on changes in social anxiety during childhood and adolescence. Social fears vary by age. Older boys and girls are also more afraid of negative social events. However, so far only a few studies have systematically examined fear through free-response methods. There are differences between self-reported fears and results obtained through fear questionnaires. The free response method of obtaining information is suitable for subjective reflection of fear and content analysis.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

Regarding the purpose of this study, we decided to use a free response method, which provides sufficient opportunities for subjectively experienced fears, unlike questionnaires, whose reporting depends on the frequency of experience of stimuli in everyday life. Our choice of method was inspired by the research project of M. Šimčáková (1999), who used a method based on the naming of fear content in a sample of early adolescents aged 11-14 years. The name of the method used was "Fear Cake". The children's task was to record their answers on separate parts of the circle. Respondents in our research project were asked to draw a circle on a blank piece of paper that represented their fear "in its entirety." They then created sectors that divided the "Fear Cake" into subjectively experienced fears and named each sector after their fear. The total level of fear in each respondent was determined by adding the sectors that reflect the individual content of fear. Data processing and analysis The number of fears reported by girls and boys within the "Fear Cake" was compared using non-parametric methods (Mann-Whitney U test) because the distribution of the data was positively changed direction. Regarding the content of the data, we used the following procedure: the fear data were classified in a manner comparable to the procedures used in other research studies on children's fears (eg, Kirmanen & Lahikainen, 1997). First, the answers (2874 in total) were classified according to their content. The purpose of the categorization was to eliminate formal differences in the expression of the same fear content. Then, categories containing fears with very specific content (e.g., fear of tarantulas, fear of zombies, fear of math) were grouped into higher-order groups of similar fears. grouped into categories - for example, fear of spiders at this level already includes fear. fear of spiders in general, as well as tarantulas, garden spiders, trap spiders, etc.

RESULTS

Description of general categories 1. School-related fears - this category includes children's fears related to school (eg, grades, tests, essays, teachers, subjects). 2. Fear of animals - this category includes a general fear of animals, a list of specific species, fear of being attacked by an animal. 3. Fear of general danger - this category includes fear of dangerous situations, which by nature threaten not only the child, but also have a global impact; In our results, we separate risk information from human factors (eg terrorism, war) and natural disasters and events (eg floods, earthquakes). 4. Fear of losing someone, fear of someone/something - this category includes fear of losing someone/something that children have a positive attitude towards; it includes fear for people in the immediate social environment (family, friends) - fear of losing them, fear of separation from them and/or fear for their safety; the category also includes fear of losing one's existence and the existence of significant others. 5. Fear of being endangered by others - this category includes fear of various individuals and their actions; In addition, in the text we present separate results for persons known to the child (for example, parents, relatives) and persons

unknown to him (for example, thieves, violent people, murderers). 6. Fears related to specific places, lifestyles - children are concerned with specific places (e.g. cemetery, loft) and their characteristics (e.g. height, depth) that are unpleasant and threatening (e.g. being at home) group of fears. dark, lonely). 7. Fear for health and body, fear of unpleasant sensations in the body - this category includes fear for one's own health and fears called "medical fear" - these are fears related to unpleasant sensations in the body associated with diseases, injuries and their treatment (for example, doctors, injections); the category also includes fear of various diseases or disabilities. 8. General fears - this category includes fears expressed in the most general sense; it also includes fears of development and the future (eg, responsibility, nihilism, occupation, adulthood). 9. Imaginary fears - the category includes fears of non-existent, supernatural beings and phenomena (for example, specters, ghosts, curses) that are subjectively threatening. 10. Media-mediated fears - a category of fears that arise from real or fictional images made by the media (for example, horror, movies, books). 11. Fear of one's own incompetence - a category of fears arising from the feeling of one's own incompetence, self-doubt and lack of confidence in coping with situations and fear of the possible consequences of one's behavior. (e.g., "I can't handle something," "it might be uncomfortable," "it might lead to something wrong," "it might not be good enough"). 12. Fears related to traffic - fears related to vehicles, movement and transportation technologies (for example, fear of cars, car accidents). 13. Fear of punishment - this category includes fear related to punishments and prohibitions applied to the child (finding, prohibition of computer games). 14. Fear of objects, substances or their attributes - fear of subjectively dangerous objects (for example, sharp objects), substances (for example, drugs) or their attributes (for example, poisonous substances) enters. 15. Sleep phobias - fears related to sleep and dreams (for example, nightmares). 16. Fear of new situations - fear associated with a new situation, activity and environment that the child has not encountered before (for example, new things, a situation I do not know). 17. Sports fears - a group of fears related to sports and sports activities (for example, skiing). 18. Fear of losing one's way, getting lost - this category includes fear of potentially dangerous situations, such as getting lost and falling into familiar and unfamiliar environments. 19. Fear of unfulfilled wishes - fears related to the desired forecasts and concerns about the fact that wishes will not be fulfilled (for example, "I won't get a gift").

The content of fears that did not fit into any of these categories was vague and vague (eg, fear of snails returning to the aquarium, general urban elements). Fear of losing someone, fear of someone/something, fear of death and loss of friends and family dominate the period under review. visible concerns (Table 1). Generalized fears are in the second place, which is significantly expressed by the fear of failure and the future. The third largest category is the category of school-related fears, represented primarily by the fear of higher education and entrance exams, as well as the fear of grades and school reports. Next comes fear of certain places, lifestyle, and fear of the dark is very common. Fear of animals is the fifth most reported group of fears. Fear of spiders and snakes can be found among the common fears in this category. The sixth largest category is fear of being threatened by others, with the majority of respondents reporting a fear of criminals and violent people. The last general category with more than 30% includes fear for health and body, fear of unpleasant sensations in the body. Fear of illness, injury, and physical harm were the most commonly reported. The other categories presented in the table represent less frequent but important groups of fears of the fifteen-year-old respondents, which give an indication of the variety and extent of the problem.

DISCUSSION

Our findings show that the feeling of fear is an important component of the inner world of experience of adolescents. Regarding the number of reported fears, we found that girls reported more fears than boys. Most of the studies confirm the effect of gender subjectively on the frequency and intensity of fear. Girls were found to report more number and intensity of fears than boys. However, there are studies that contradict these conclusions. However, the repeated findings of greater frequency and intensity of fear in girls do not provide sufficient evidence that

girls have a higher fear response. Regarding the results of the analysis on the number of fears, it should be noted that the variable under consideration, that is, the number of fears expressed in the open-ended response method, in our case, does not reflect only the "Fear Cake". the prevalence of fear in the respondent's life, but also contaminated by other factors. These factors may include, for example, level of verbal fluency, achievement motivation, willingness to comply with the examiner's requirements, or level of cognitive abilities. Therefore, if an open-ended response method is used, information about the content of experienced emotions should be more valuable than information about the number of fears. An analysis of reported fears shows that the content of this emotion can vary greatly during adolescence. The most frequently reported fear of fifteen-year-old respondents was related to losing someone, being afraid of someone/something. Thanks to his mature mental functions, a teenager can better understand and anticipate a threatening situation than before. The ability to hypothesize about potential threats to oneself and others can lead to deeper reflection and reflection. Factors that may contribute to the prevalence of this category include the fact that the fifteen-year-old can think in the context of an already completed concept of death and that the separation-individuation process is imminent. complete. Death, as a clear symbol of separation, represents an important theme of the adolescent's focus. At the behavioral level, we can observe coping strategies that serve adolescents to control the increase in fear with the content of death - distance, humorous devaluation, cynicism, provocation, dangerous games, etc. Idealizing and mythologizing death may be another strategy. This is reflected in the proliferation of highly spiritual philosophical discussions about the meaning of life and death (Orbach et al., 1993). An important representative of this category is the fear of death, the fear of losing another, and the fear for the family. Similarly, a study by Lane and Gullone (1999) showed a high prevalence of fear of death or death of a family member in adolescents, both girls and boys. An important factor that can contribute to the spread of this type of fear is the increased likelihood that a teenager will experience death in his environment (for example, the death of a grandparent). In this category, we observed a clear spread of fear related to the friends and friendships of teenagers. The content of the fear is related to the loss of friends. In the shadow of this fear, the importance of friends for teenagers fully corresponds to the developmental characteristics of the period under consideration. As the process of gradual separation from the family continues, the importance of the peer group increases. For a teenager of this age, peers represent an important identity group. Increasing the time spent with friends ensures that important needs are met; adolescents also acquire necessary social competence and experiences (Larson & Richards, 1991). "Lack of friends" is also an important criterion in the social assessment of a teenager and his acceptance by others.

CONCLUSION

Our findings confirm the validity of the instrument we used; the tool allows you to show the whole range of subjectively experienced fears during this developmental period. The frequency and prevalence of individual fear categories indicate middle adolescence, which corresponds to general characteristics of cognitive, emotional, and social development. It also provides evidence of wider environmental influences and describes the historical and social context of the period in which adolescents become adults.

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