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**PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRECTION OF COMMUNICATIVE DYSFUNCTIONS
IN THE FAMILY RELATIONS SYSTEM****Abstract**

The article examines corrective strategies for addressing communicative disorders within family relationships. The relevance of the topic stems from the growing levels of intrapersonal and interpersonal instability in the context of sociocultural fragmentation, the transformation of the institutional structure of the family, and the erosion of traditional role scenarios. Rising divorce rates, emotional alienation among family members, and the deterioration of intergenerational dialogue underscore the urgent need to clarify not only the nature of communicative breakdowns but also the methods for their effective mitigation. The aim of this study is to identify the specific features of communicative distortions within the family system, to determine their markers, and to substantiate targeted correctional methods within an integrative framework. A review of contemporary literature revealed significant methodological divergences: some scholars attribute communicative dysfunctions primarily to the emotional inadequacy of partners, while others emphasize institutional, sociolinguistic, or situational determinants. Notably, the systemic analysis of latent forms of communicative dysfunction remains underdeveloped. The article outlines key barriers to effective correction and presents the author's perspective on strategies for overcoming them. The materials presented are intended for family psychologists, conflict resolution consultants, clinical psychologists, educators, and researchers in the fields of interpersonal communication and family psychology.

Keywords:

interaction, communicative disorders, communication, conflict, correction,
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Introduction

Over the past few decades, interest in the quality of communication within the family as a key factor in psychological well-being has increased substantially. Difficulties in this area often prove to be not only a consequence of family conflict but also one of its primary causes.

Confrontational patterns, distorted feedback, emotional withdrawal and distorted expectations all contribute to mounting tension and deteriorating relationships.

Nevertheless, despite the prevalence of these difficulties, approaches to addressing them are often limited to surface-level techniques that do not engage with the underlying structures of interpersonal interaction.

The mechanisms underlying distortions in family communication remain insufficiently systematized in research and clinical practice. It is often overlooked that the issue is not simply an ineffective exchange of information, but a complex interplay of meanings, emotions, attitudes, role expectations and other factors. This creates a need for a more multifaceted analysis and for comprehensive intervention strategies that address both speech acts and the overall structure of family interaction.

Materials and methods

An analysis of the research literature on this topic identifies several substantive areas in which contemporary research is developing. The sources can provisionally be classified into three thematic groups: studies of general trends in family communication and its destructive manifestations; research on the emotional dimension of interaction within the family; and publications focusing on specific mechanisms and linguistic features of family communication.

For example, materials published by VCIOM in 2024 [1] describe trends in divorce in Russia, interpreting them as an indicator of disruptions in the system of interpersonal interaction between spouses. This macro-level analytical approach provides a basis for more detailed psychosocial research. E.K. Dorozhenko and I.F. Shilyaeva [2] examine manifestations of conflict as a disruption of the communicative structure of spousal dialogue, emphasizing social transformations as triggers that intensify contradictions. A.A. Lubkova [3], in turn, analyzes the influence of communication style on the formation of stable patterns of interpersonal behavior.

M.A. Odintsova, N.P. Radchikova, E.G. Musokhranova and N.V. Azaryonok [4] investigate how the emotional intensity of communication affects a family's psychosocial resilience. M.D. Petrash, O.Yu. Strizhitskaya and T.S. Kharitonova [5] address similar issues, describing the intergenerational effects of emotional involvement and their influence on family members' psychological well-being. The work of A.O. Kaminska, N.G. Pshuk and Y.Y. Martynova [10] emphasizes the importance of social and emotional intelligence in developing communicative resources.

A.Yu. Pomnikova [6] considers family stories as a means of informal educational influence with the potential to foster integration through communication. E.N. Radion [7] raises the issue of restrictions on the range of topics discussed in family conversations, highlighting how

narrowing this range limits mutual understanding. P.A. Razina [8] investigates the use of hints as an implicit form of communication that can either facilitate or hinder open dialogue. E.F. Simakova [9] attempts to understand the problem systemically, viewing the family as a complex social subsystem in which communication is an integral mechanism of self-regulation and adaptation.

Thus, several established methodological approaches can be identified in the literature: structural-functional, emotional-psychological, linguistic-communicative and sociocultural, the latter taking account of the context of social change.

Despite the substantial number of publications, unresolved issues and disagreements remain in the research literature. Some authors interpret communication difficulties solely as a reflection of distortions in individual functioning, while others highlight structural and social determinants. Interventions addressing communication difficulties in mixed and transnational families remain insufficiently developed. Little attention is paid to the communicative role of digital media or to the mechanisms for restoring dialogue after periods of acute conflict. Empirical research using experimental and longitudinal methods is limited.

The following methods were used in preparing this article: content analysis of scholarly sources, comparison, systematization, processing of statistical summaries, elements of narrative and discourse analysis, and synthesis.

Results and discussion

Family communication takes shape at the intersection of personal histories, cultural norms and current life circumstances. Its character is determined not only by what family members communicate to one another, but also by how this occurs: through particular intonations, pauses, gestures and contexts. The principal sources of misunderstanding are often hidden in these nuances.

Typical destructive communication patterns include the following variants (Figure 1).

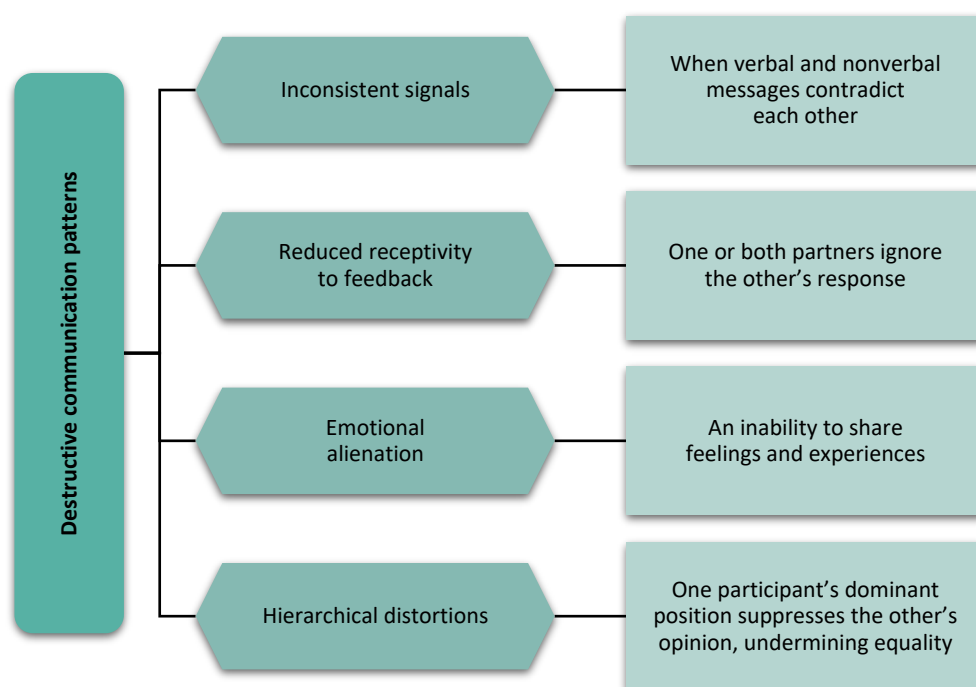


Figure 1 – Variants of destructive communication schemes
(compiled by the author on the basis of [2-4, 6, 9])

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The difficulties described above are rarely accidental. As a rule, they become entrenched through accumulated mutual resentments, family scripts that have not been reflected upon, and unconscious defense mechanisms. A study conducted by M.A. Odintsova and colleagues involving 853 respondents from Russia and Belarus showed that dysfunctional family communication has a powerful influence on family resilience and the psychological state of adult children [4]. According to a VCIOM survey conducted in 2024, 23% of Russian respondents identify communication breakdown as one of the main causes of family problems, while 14% identify misunderstanding as a key factor in conflict [1].

The development of persistent communication breakdowns is closely linked to each family member's attachment history. The availability of emotional support and ways of responding to frustration shape expectations about communication with a partner or with children. If silence, emotional suppression or blame predominated in the family of origin, there is a high likelihood that these same patterns will be reproduced in adult interactions.

Cognitive distortions create additional difficulties, such as a habitual tendency to interpret neutral statements as hostile or to expect constant criticism. Under these conditions, even a constructive initiative may be perceived as a threat. Limited awareness of one's own communication patterns and reluctance to take responsibility for emerging difficulties exacerbate the problem, making communication between partners particularly vulnerable.

Meaningful change in communication requires not only learning new skills, but also reconsidering the fundamental attitudes underlying family interaction. The most productive areas of psychological work are considered below (Figure 2).

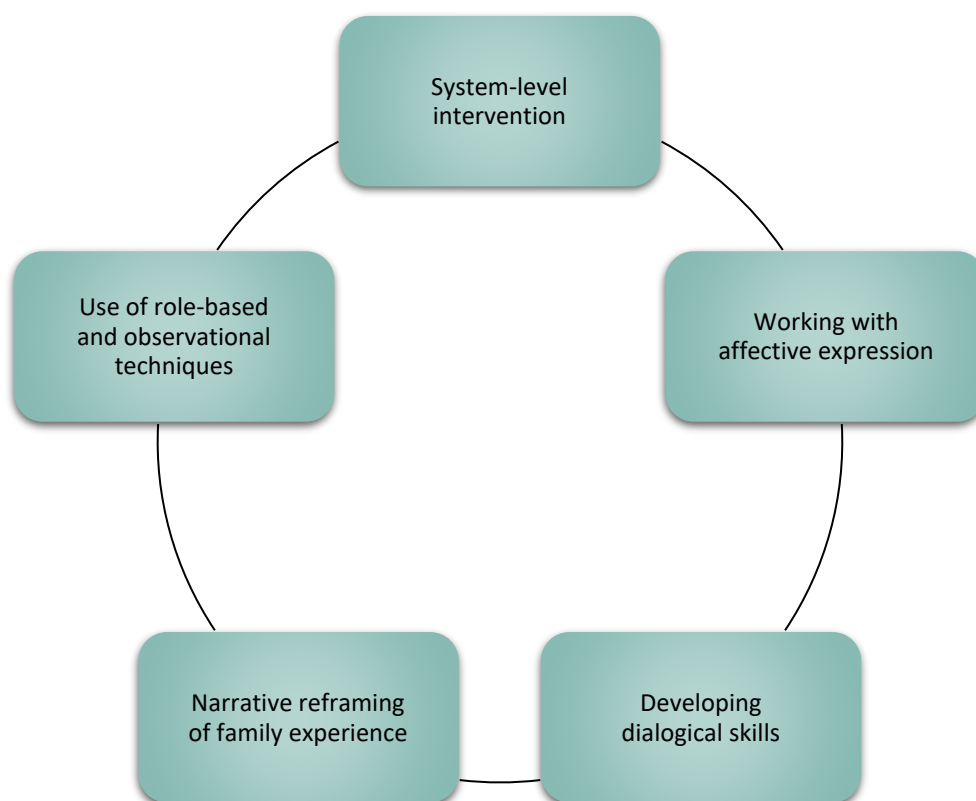


Figure 2 – Approaches to correcting communication disorders in family relationships
(compiled by the author on the basis of [3, 5, 6, 9])

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From a systemic perspective, the family is viewed as an integrated structure in which each participant's behavior affects the others. Intervention therefore focuses not on correcting the "wrong" behavior of one partner, but on identifying the recurring scripts that maintain the current state of affairs. As E.F. Simakova aptly observes, the specialist's task is to help family members recognize automatic reactions, identify implicit rules of interaction and begin to develop new, more flexible forms of communication [9].

Problems in this area often arise not from a lack of willingness to interact, but from an inability to communicate one's emotional state accurately. The ability to identify and verbalize feelings is therefore especially important. During the intervention process, participants learn to distinguish nuances in their own experiences and to recognize the emotional signals of other family members. This is important when alexithymic traits are present, or in couples where shame and fear of expressing feelings inhibit dialogue.

Exercises in active listening, clarifying the meaning of what has been heard and expressing needs without exerting pressure provide a foundation for trusting, respectful communication. Using "I-statements," replacing accusatory tones with descriptions of one's own feelings and states, and practicing pauses and self-reflection help reduce tension and foster understanding between partners.

A family is not only a social unit; its members are also co-authors of a collective story. Sometimes the way this story is told reinforces the participants' negative identities: one is always the "victim," while the other is invariably the "persecutor." The narrative approach proposes a change of perspective, placing difficult episodes in a broader context and opening up alternative interpretations. This shifts the focus from mutual reproaches to overcoming obstacles and challenges together.

Observing one's own communication "from the outside" can sometimes be effective. Techniques such as mirroring dialogue, adopting the position of an outside observer or using video feedback make it possible to notice habitual patterns of speech and behavior that remain outside conscious awareness in everyday life. This approach encourages inquiry rather than blame: "What am I doing that might be perceived differently from what I intend?"

Barriers to intervention arise when a family views it as a way to "fix" another person rather than as a shared effort to restructure relationships. Resistance to change may also emerge, especially when the old communication pattern provides a degree of stability or a hidden benefit. In these cases, the specialist needs to work gently but persistently, sustaining motivation for change and keeping attention focused on processes rather than accusations. Figure 3 systematizes ways of overcoming these barriers.



Figure 3 – Ways to overcome barriers to correcting communication disorders in family relationships
(compiled by the author)

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It would seem that a key condition for effective intervention is not only the specialist's professionalism, but also the family's willingness to engage in self-observation, experimentation and sustained work. Communication is not simply a skill, but a way of being that takes time to relearn and integrate.

Conclusions

Addressing communication difficulties in family relationships is not a matter of eliminating symptoms in a single step. It is a complex, gradual process of restructuring patterns of meaning and behavior that have developed over many years. Intervention in this area requires the specialist to distinguish carefully between surface-level communication difficulties and deeper interpersonal dynamics that generate persistent distortions in perception and expression.

Family communication functions as a medium for the regulation of meaning, reflecting

individual attitudes, expectations, the emotional climate and historically established forms of mutual adaptation. Difficulties within this system cannot be reduced to problems of expression or listening alone; they are linked to unconscious role scripts. In this context, communication difficulties serve as markers of broader structural incongruities.

Restoring these processes is possible only through an approach that simultaneously addresses emotional expression, redefines role positions, rebuilds trust and develops the capacity for self-reflection. The use of systemic, dialogical and narrative practices helps not merely to improve “communication technique,” but to initiate qualitative changes in the perception of the other person as an individual with a complex inner life and a right to autonomous self-expression.

In summary, the effectiveness of intervention depends both on the psychologist’s professional tools and on the extent of the family’s engagement in the process of transformation. A willingness to examine one’s own communication habits, the ability to step temporarily outside habitual patterns of reproach and self-justification, and openness to experimentation become decisive conditions for lasting change.

Thus, the intervention considered here cannot be reduced to the formal acquisition of new behavioral patterns. It involves a profound reconsideration of the very nature of interaction within the family and a redefinition of the meanings on which communication is built. Only then can one speak not simply of “establishing contact,” but of a genuine reconfiguration of relationships.

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