

СВОБОДНОТО ВРЕМЕ В ПРЕВЕНЦИЯТА НА РИСКОВОТО ПОВЕДЕНИЕ СРЕД МЛАДЕЖИТЕ

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LEISURE TIME IN PREVENTION OF RISK BEHAVIOR IN YOUNG PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT: *In our postindustrial and technological society, leisure is an important pillar of development which is increasingly related to concepts like progress, well-being and quality of life. Its multiple and varied manifestations have relevant cultural consequences and economic.*

Leisure time is an important part of everyday life, both for the individual and the groups in modern society, and is also an indicator of the way and quality of everyday life. It is an important factor for the integration of the individual in society, as well as for his mental and physical development.

Participation in purposeful, organized and conceived leisure activities of young people successfully affects the realization and development of their abilities, as well as training for quality and productive use of their leisure time. Only then does leisure time become its primary goal, which is not to „kill“ time and join / accept risky behaviors, but in an active engagement and a healthy way of spending it.

Hence the need to actualize this issue and take concrete actions of all stakeholders who in turn contribute to quality and meaningful spending of leisure time of young people. The interest in this issue arises due to the fact that children today have more and more leisure time that is not structured and adequately used. And the facts show that inadequately organized leisure time can be a risk factor for the development of numerous risky and delinquent behaviors in young people, the opportunity to enter the world of experimenting with risky behavior, delinquency, various forms of addiction, and other forms of socially unwanted behavior.

KEYWORDS: *leisure time, risky behavior, youth, prevention*

Introduction

Leisure time (English – leisure, leisure time; French – loisir; German – freizeit; Italian – tempo libero) is seen as a changing social phenomenon and a modern phenomenon, which marks and affect on all areas of social life.

Leisure time is seen as a social phenomenon that has existed since the beginning of humanity. All the activities that man began to engage in and what over time became part of the identity of a people, were done during leisure time. That is why it can be said that it is the foundation on which the cultures and traditions of the world were developed, that is, it is the instrument that enabled their development. In addition to this, its importance lies in the fact that today a lot can be concluded about an individual based on the way he spends his leisure time [5].

Previšić [6] considers leisure time as a space and opportunity for interaction in the processes of individualization, socialization and interculturalization, a space for self-actualization and personal realization. The term "self-actualization" denotes the degree

of personal emancipation, personal achievement, and the satisfaction of personal creation. For the individual, it is a space of "intimacy" where he explores his potentials and/or in which he "completes" everything that, according to his subjective and/or objective assessment, was necessary to be realized in order to be able to fully feel complete and competent. Instead of engaging in his profession, in his leisure time the individual engages in amateur activities. Through them, man "releases his creative abilities for the sake of play, filling his leisure time with valuable content" [9].

The definition of leisure time has changed according to the development of society. Today, the most acceptable definition is the one according to which: leisure time is that part of the time that an individual has at his disposal outside of his professional, social and family obligations, for the purpose of rest, recreation and personal development, within the framework of the natural and social conditioning and reality of the environment in which the individual lives and acts [1].

The concept of leisure time and its essential characteristics should be observed in dynamic development, in distance, and in the relationship between children and adults, and therefore the meaning of its definition should be adapted to the specificities of individual periods of development.

According to Barakovska, "the student's leisure time is that time outside of imposed family and school obligations, with the aim of not only rest and recreation, but also personal development in the spirit of overall educational endeavors".

Characteristics of young people's leisure time

Everyone chooses their leisure time according to their personal interests and spends it as qualitatively as possible, because every individual need leisure time and should use it in the right way. It seems that nowadays leisure time is less and less, and if we need the little time we have or have had, we don't have it because its organization is absent.

Leisure time, as a resource, should be observed simultaneously as a space for great educational opportunities, challenges and chances, but on the other hand, as a space for dilemmas, possible dangers, missed opportunities [9].

Leisure time represents one of the important factors for personality development, as it offers opportunities for young people to activate their creative powers and satisfy their needs and interests. It offers young people the opportunity for social, emotional, professional, physical, cognitive and social engagement and development [11].

Youth is a special period of human development in which young people are expected to develop their social skills and abilities to assume permanent social roles in all areas of human activity. Children and young people, as well as adults, spend their leisure time differently. Hence, the types of activities offered in leisure time should be adapted to the age of the individual.

The leisure time of young people is a relatively large space of time. It is a part of the life of young people and if it is not sufficiently thought out and managed, it can become a space for negative influence on the development and life of young people. That is why it is of particular importance to help young people to organize and structure their leisure time and to enable them to participate in its creation. At the same time, it is important to take into account their wishes, the need for fun,

socializing, but of course also for activities that include both physical and mental effort, and that all of this is in accordance with their leisure choice. That is why it is equally important to influence all stakeholders/factors that have an influence in organizing the leisure time of young people, such as family, school, peers, mass communication media, as well as local self-government.

The results of numerous domestic and foreign research show that today's young people mostly spend their leisure time socializing with their peers, usually going to cafes and disco clubs. After that, they spend most of their time on social networks, using the internet in general. In that context, attention must be paid to the ways in which leisure time can be organized. The greatest attention should be paid to the activities that lead to the development of the personality, and then to the function of leisure and rest, because young people mainly focus on the last two, which can sometimes have negative consequences. There are frequent situations in which they have at their disposal quite disorganized leisure time, and they spend it in inadequate ways, joining bad company and practicing various risky behaviors that can lead to behavioral disorders. They usually start by skipping classes, lying about where and with whom they spend their leisure time, and often end up using drugs and alcohol, which can lead to legal violations. That is why it is important to know how to organize leisure time in a quality way and fill it with activities that suit and encourage the appropriate development of the individual's personality [5].

The leisure time of young people today is increasingly manifested with so-called disco culture. Disco clubs are adapted to the diverse club scene, in them young people "erase" the reality of life and produce a state of trance. There they feel relaxed, and at the same time they are offered an opportunity/opportunity for a surprise, a new meeting, a new experience [7].

The need for entertainment and the entertainment itself of young people serves to fulfill the time that remains available to them after the completion of school duties, and the engagement in such entertainments is little or none. They use that time going out to disco clubs, watching TV programs, reading "yellow press", listening to music of different quality. Such a culture is created according to the mass norms of industrial production, spread through the means of mass diffusion and addresses the wider population [5].

Today, due to the fast lifestyle and the demands of work, leisure time is more and more valued. Under the influence of the hedonistic way of life, where commercialization and culturally unwanted / undesirable activities prevail, we often have imposed and aggressive contents in the structure of leisure time. Today's youth experience their reality through a virtual world that brings with it numerous negative consequences for mental health. The present modernization, mobile devices, tablets, TV, computers offer easy models of learning, creation, thinking and behavior, but also a change of the previous frameworks of spending leisure time. The number of children and adults who often spend their leisure time in front of TV screens or mobile devices is increasing.

Just sitting in front of the computer reduces physical activity and leads to sedentary behavior in children. There are studies [8] that state that children aged 4-15 watch TV on average about 20 hours a week. There is also an increase in taking children to school by car. Another study by the American Pediatric Association from

1999 found that children spend an average of 6 hours and 32 minutes. daily on any of the various media [8].

All this contributes to physical inactivity, which, according to the WHO report [16], has been declared an independent risk factor for mortality and represents the greatest health problem of a nation. Children and adults in modern society have unlimited access to TV, computers, various games, mobile phones and the Internet which has become a new world of possibilities. The low level of physical activity significantly affects the large percentage of residents suffering from obesity in Europe [3], and the latest findings from numerous researches confirm the fact of increased obesity among children and young people under the influence of a sedentary lifestyle and reduced physical activity.

It is a fact that young people have more leisure time than adults, and therefore it is of particular importance how it will be filled and used. Leisure time is a need, a meaning and an integral part of the life of children, young people and adults, and therefore its daily presence is important. It is important for it to be functional, flexible and rationally arranged, and most importantly to be adapted to the needs, wishes and possibilities of the individual [7].

Risky behavior

Unorganized and unguided activities of young people in their leisure time may be contrary to social norms and values. Such spending of leisure time can have negative consequences arising from feelings of boredom, which can result in social problems and various forms of risky behavior. It suggests the planning and management of leisure time necessary to maximize the benefits associated with positive leisure activities and avoid risky behaviors.

Risky behavior can be defined as all behaviors of young people that endanger their own health and threaten social values. The following terms are used as synonyms for this term in contemporary literature: behavioral disorders, socially unacceptable behavior, antisocial behavior, children with behavioral difficulties, abnormal behavior, delinquent behavior, educational neglect, criminal behavior, etc. Ricijaš, Krajcer and Bouillet [15] define risky behavior as the behavior of a young person that increases the possibility of an unwanted result and that has potentially negative consequences for the person who manifests such behavior, for his environment and adversely affects on the further psychosocial development of the young person, i.e. it increases the probability of behavior disorder.

Problems in the child's behavior can appear as a result of not meeting the child's emotional and psychological needs, when he is not able to verbalize them, so he chooses behavior that is not in accordance with expectations and can be considered unacceptable. Such behaviors usually begin to manifest in the family, and later in other environments where the child is involved, such as preschool, school, peers, and the local environment.

This term is often used to cover various types of socially maladjusted or conspicuous deviance in behavior and is often associated with young people (although it is not unique to them) [11]. The most common risky behaviors among young people are: consumption of cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, frequent changes of sexual partners, participation in thefts and aggressive behavior, dropping out of school.

Possibilities for the prevention of risky behavior among young people

The initial means of preventing risky behavior is prevention. It is a proactive process through which the individual and the system are offered opportunities, help and support to deal with life's challenges, events, transitions, creating conditions that encourage and promote healthy behavior and development of independent and healthy individuals [5]. Prevention means to create opportunities, conditions and experiences that encourage and develop autonomous and healthy people, and are based on understanding the factors that lead to a problem and understanding the possible variations of those factors.

Every organized society makes efforts to develop and direct the positive interests and abilities of young people and at the same time creates conditions for material, spatial and other conditions for their expression and satisfaction in their leisure time. When leisure time is not spent in the specified ways, it can be idle time - a time of boredom and lounging, and it becomes a factor for the action of various unwanted factors for taking and accepting antisocial forms of behavior.

Leisure time and the way it is spent, the activities with which it is filled, is one of the ways to prevent the emergence and manifestation of risky behavior among young people. The family, the school, the entire educational system, the local community and the child's environment in general, are institutions that should encourage active and productive leisure time and offer support and advice to young people in the organization of the same. It can be implemented with meaningful programs, activities and contents in order to prevent the emergence and development of interests towards risky behavior [5]. It is important to give young people examples and guidelines for healthy and productive spending of leisure time, which would contribute to the development of the overall personality.

Exactly the activities that are offered to the individual in his leisure time that can be considered as the primary prevention in the emergence and development of unwanted/risky behavior among children and young people.

That is why it is important to act preventively and devise contents and activities that will contribute to quality spending of leisure time. For that, it is important to create adequate material, spatial, personnel and institutional opportunities for the proper use of leisure time. According to Jašovicu [13] "the preventive role of organized forms of using leisure time must be perceived and treated within the broader system of factors, means, methods and techniques for preventing the criminal behavior of young people"

The role of the school

The school is one of the factors that should offer children and young people various forms of leisure activities in which they will be involved according to their own will and interest. The teacher should also try to implement activities that would be interesting for children and young people during regular classes. Often, the students themselves give suggestions on how to spend their leisure time together after finishing school duties. In today's teaching, we talk about various opportunities to spend our leisure time, so we can talk about "leisure time" in classrooms as well. This topic can

also be used as a debate in the class: how leisure time can positively and negatively affect young people, that is, the choice of right or wrong activities in leisure time [7].

In order for the school to offer interesting and attractive programs, it is good at the beginning of the school year to examine their attitudes, wishes and interests, find out what they want to do, determine the amount of leisure time and arrange them accordingly. contents and make a suitable program. In doing so, it is important that the student's interests are respected and satisfied. The organization of leisure time should be filled with useful, current and attractive contents that will attract the attention of the individual.

Extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activities are one of the preventive measures that can be used to influence the emergence and possible elimination of risky behavior among children and young people. Research shows that engaging in extracurricular activities allows students to build a positive attitude towards school and contributes to raising students' motivation to achieve higher school success. Although there is no evidence that extracurricular activities directly contribute to improving students' school performance, research shows that participation in extracurricular activities reduces students' risky behavior and reduces the risk of dropping out [2].

It is very important when developing and implementing extracurricular activities to choose those that encourage positive emotions in students, such as curiosity, satisfaction, hope and pride, because these emotions increase the motivation to participate both in teaching and learning in classes and in informal after-class activities, support learning, increase academic achievement and direct them to the choice of future professions and occupations [2].

Extracurricular programs that are high quality and well-designed offer structured, safe, supervised opportunities for community involvement, and in turn reduce the risk and possibility of developing delinquent and other risky behaviors. Research shows that high-quality extracurricular programs that focus on promoting personal and social skills can reduce drug use and behavioral problems [4].

A study conducted by Child Trends concluded that adolescents who were involved in high-quality extracurricular activities often avoided risky behaviors, performed better in school, and had higher social competence than children who were not involved in extracurricular activities. the same [4].

Since the extracurricular activities themselves give the teachers the leisuedom to choose a topic together with the students, they can be used to discuss risky behavior among children. Through various forms of work with students, the problem of occurrence and forms of risky behavior, consequences, opportunities for recognition, ways of reacting, persons to whom they can turn for help, etc. can be examined. At the same time, the various forms of work within extracurricular activities enable an individual approach in working with students [10].

Nowadays, the number of individuals who are focused on the cultural values and activities that contribute to the formation of the new culture is decreasing. The school, with its curricular and extracurricular activities, is an institution that can develop the culture of spending leisure time among young people. Quality extracurricular activities are a place for coexistence with others, socializing and

development, through these activities children and young people are offered a "helping hand and support", and it is up to them whether they accept it or refuse it [7].

Physical activity as a factor for risk behavior prevention

Special attention should be paid to the physical activity that children and young people have in their leisure time. Today's youth mostly spend their leisure time passively, mostly sitting, with a minimum of physical activity. More and more reports warn that children grow up with a lack of movement and an earlier onset of some physical and mental illnesses (eg fears, eating disorders, etc.). The lack of parental care and the influence through the passive consumption of the media (TV, computer, telephone, etc.) are most often cited as the reason for this condition. From here, it is important to point out that from a young age, children should be directed towards appropriate growth and daily practice of play, sports and movement [9].

Since the young, and even the elderly, mainly spend their leisure time passively, mostly sitting, physical activity should have priority in that context, so that there would be no delay in physical development, especially among the younger population. Practicing physical activities contributes to socialization, reduction of anxiety, positive direction of aggression and can also serve as an "exhaust valve" for calming down [5]. Leisure time affects our health, is related to our psychological well-being, improves and builds our lifestyle, the way of self-expression and achievement of life's pleasures.

The way of life today, in our country and worldwide, includes a sedentary way of spending the individual's life, which of course ultimately leads to poor physical and mental health. This type of sitting affects the physical and social condition of the individual, his emotions, and especially the bone and muscle system. So we often forget about movement and physical activity in our life.

Children are recommended to play sports from the youngest age, and if they do not have sports ambitions, they are recommended to do recreational activities that are available to everyone. At the same time, it is recommended that all children and young people use their leisure time to engage in useful and interesting activities in the field of music, art and other creative activities. Children are active by nature, but as they get older they become more inclined towards inactivity. For that, from a young age, we need to develop physical activity habits and guide them to recognize the true values of sports and recreational activities [12].

Activities that include sports and physical activities require compliance with certain rules, which would mean the acquisition of habits among students to respect the rules in the activity and in general, as well as familiarization with the disciplinary rules that are applied as a logical consequence due to non-compliance with the rules.

A key task of today's society should be the creation of healthy habits for lifelong thoughtful use of leisure time, which includes independent physical exercise in leisure time.

Conclusion

Leisure time, together with the activities with which it is filled, has a significant role in the quality of life. There are numerous studies that show the connection between the amount of leisure time and the way it is spent with the development of various behavioral problems. This is especially visible among adolescents who are starting to form their identity in that period. They take on more responsibilities,

become more independent, so they look for new experiences, including those that carry a certain risk. All that searching, experimenting and searching for one's own identity happens in leisure time, and therefore it is necessary to pay special attention to the way it is organized and spent [5].

Young people had the most leisure time, especially in developed societies. That is why it is of particular importance to pay attention to the way young people spend their leisure time and the activities with which it is fulfilled. Specifically, the activities that the individual engages in in his leisure time, if they are not organized and structured, may be related to the manifestation of certain risky behaviors.

Risky behavior in the broadest sense can be considered as behavior that deviates from social norms, and the consequences of that behavior can be incomprehensible if they are not prevented.

Parents should pay special attention to respecting the wishes and interests of children when choosing an activity they want to do in their leisure time. Otherwise, revolt, spite, and frustrations can manifest among young people, which can be manifested through certain risky behavior among young people. Leisure time brings with it a great responsibility in terms of organization and choosing activities that the individual will engage in, and with that, responsibility towards oneself and one's own self-realization.

There are many ways to prevent the occurrence of risky behavior among children and young people. As one of the more commonly accepted ways are: offering interesting content and activities within separate teaching subjects, within extracurricular activities, encouraging debates that will openly discuss the problems that encourage such unwanted behavior and the possibilities for their timely prevention, promoting and practicing a healthy life and more physical activity in our everyday life.

Despite the results of numerous researches that indicate the importance of the activities that the individual engages in in his leisure time, in society they were often considered optional, but not a necessary and significant factor that affects the organization and prevention of behavior among children and young people. In our country, leisure time is still considered a time of rest from daily activities, and therefore it is not structured. That is why it is particularly important that leisure time education becomes an integral part of the educational system and a factor for educational transformation [14], with the necessary engagement of psychologists and pedagogues in organizing and structuring the leisure time of young people, in order to prevent the emergence of unwanted and risky behavior among children and young people.

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