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STRUCTURE OF DEFENSE AND COPING BEHAVIOR OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE

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Statistical analysis; D – Manuscript Preparation.*

Relevance of the research. Human living abilities in the modern conditions are closely connected with influence of a great number of unfavorable factors which specify the necessity of development of the effective defense and coping behavior providing capability to cope with numerous life difficulties. Coping and defense mechanisms are integral components of the adults' social and emotional functioning. Meanwhile, the persistent stylistic characteristics of coping behavior being developed while adulthood might prevent adults from using their capabilities and resources in realizing the adaptive coping behavior. The necessity of studying defense and coping behavior and its recourses of the young people, one of which is reflection, is defined by the fact that it is appropriate to conduct the psychological measures of coping behavior optimization in youth as the first period of adulthood.

Aim of the research: Definition of the structure of defense and coping behavior of the young people with various intensity and ratio of the reflexive processes.

Methods: Testing (questionnaire "Differential type of reflection" by D. A. Leontiev and E. N. Osin; questionnaire "The Life Style Index" by R.

Plutchik, G. Kellerman and H.R. Conte in adaptation of L. Vasserman; "Methods of coping behavior" by R. Lazarus and S. Folkman in adaptation of L. Vasserman; "Coping behavior in stressful situations" by S. Norman, D. Endler, D. James, M. Parker in adaptation of T.L. Krukova); statistical data processing methods (analysis of k-means clustering, correlation analysis and Pirson's method). The research included 90 persons of 20-30 years old.

Results of the research. Three variants of the reflexive processes correlation have been determined: average-low level of the system reflection with average-high level of introspection and quasi-reflection; average level of the system reflection with low level of introspection and quasi-reflection; high level of the system reflection with average level of introspection and quasi-reflection. The group of young people with high level of the system reflection and average level of introspection and quasi-reflection are characterized by the most structure coherence of defense and coping behavior.

Keywords: *defense and coping behavior, defense and coping behavior structure, copings, defense mechanisms, reflexive processes, system reflection, introspection, quasi-reflection, young person.*

Структура захисно-совладаючої поведінки молоді

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Актуальність дослідження. Життєдіяльність людей за сучасних умов пов'язана з впливом багатьох несприятливих чинників, що зумовлює необхідність розвитку ефективної захисно-совладаючої поведінки, яка забезпечує здатність справлятися з численними життєвими труднощами. Механізми подолання й захисту є невід'ємними складовими соціально-емоційного функціонування

дорослих. Водночас стійкі стильові особливості совладаючої поведінки, що складаються під час дорослості, можуть заважати дорослим використовувати свої можливості й ресурси в реалізації адаптивної копінг-поведінки. Важливість вивчення захисно-совладаючої поведінки та її ресурсів, одним з яких у дослідженні розглядається рефлексія, у молоді визначається тим, що психологічні заходи щодо оптимізації совладаючої поведінки доречно проводити в молодості як першому з періодів дорослого віку.

Мета дослідження: визначення структури захисно-совладаючої поведінки молоді із різною вираженістю та співвідношенням рефлексивних процесів.

Методи дослідження: тестування (опитувальник «Диференціальний тип рефлексивності» Д. О. Леонт'єва і Є. М. Осіна; опитувальник «Індекс життєвого стилю» Р. Плутчика, Х. Келлермана, Х. Р. Конте в адаптації Л. Й. Вассермана; методика «Способи совладаючої поведінки» Р. Лазаруса і С. Фолкман в адаптації Л. Й. Вассермана; методика «Копінг-поведінка в стресових ситуаціях» С. Нормана, Д. Ендлера, Д. Джеймса, М. Паркера в адаптації Т. Л. Крюкової); методи статистичної обробки даних (кластерний аналіз методом k -середніх, кореляційний аналіз за методом Пірсона). У дослідженні брали участь 90 осіб віком від 20 до 30 років.

Результати дослідження. Визначено три варіанти співвідношення рефлексивних процесів: середньо-низького рівня системної рефлексії з середньо-високим рівнем інтроспекції і квазірефлексії; середнього рівня системної рефлексії з низьким рівнем інтроспекції та квазірефлексії; високого рівня системної рефлексії з середнім рівнем інтроспекції та квазірефлексії. Найбільша узгодженість структури захисно-совладаючої поведінки визначена за групою молоді з високими показниками системної рефлексії, середніми показниками інтроспекції та квазірефлексії.

Ключові слова: захисно-совладаюча поведінка, структура захисно-совладаючої поведінки, копінг, захисні механізми, рефлексивні процеси, системна рефлексія, інтроспекція, квазірефлексія, особистість молодого віку.

Introduction. In the psychological investigations of the latest decades the tendency to unification of psychological defense and stress coping mechanisms as two basic forms or aspects of a human's adaptive processes, as the processes in the controlling behavior structure, as the components of the whole regulatory system has been formed (Petrova, 2014; Maricutoiu, Crasovan, 2016; Panfill, 2020). For instance, A.G. Petrova (2014) represents defense mechanisms and coping behavior as the whole regulatory system functioning in the situation of the external or internal conflict and including the subsystems of personality stabilization and coping. Personality stabilization subsystem comprises unconscious psychological defense mechanisms. Its function is to remove or reduce the feeling of anxiety connected with some negative situations by protecting conscious sphere from traumatic experience. Coping subsystem is considered as personality's activity directed to removal or minimizing of the anxiety source. Its function lies in arrangement of relationships between an individual and environment. This subsystem in the content-related plan is performed by the psychological coping phenomena and the author defines it as defensive coping.

T.A. Tkachuk (2011) expressing the similar views, emphasizes that psychological defense mechanisms work according to the principle "right here, right now" providing with a regulative personality stabilizing system directed to psychological discomfort removal and anxiety reduction, and coping has a delayed effect meant for the perspective.

According to F.Yu. Vasiluk, "the function which is ascribed to the defense processes lies in provision of time for preparation of more effective stress coping processes" (1984; 27). E.I. Kirshbaum and A. Eremeeva (2000) consider that defense mechanisms which are activated in psycho-traumatic situations, act as some peculiar barriers on the way of the advancing information, which is anxious for a personality, allowing to preserve harmony and tranquility of a personality.

I.O. Nikolenko (2017) relates psychological defense mechanisms to the structure of the personal factors of coping

behavior which are the basis for “perception of the objective preconditions for coping strategies formation which are reflected in human conscience as exposure to stress and activity loading and with reference to which human interpersonal relationships and life roles develop” (Nikonenko, 2017: 45).

According to I.M. Nikolska (2011) psychological defense mechanisms are the basis of the specific coping options. Having analyzed the structure of human defense system, the author defines four basic levels which are successively formed in ontogenesis and at the same time function in adulthood: somatic-vegetative or physiological level whereon adaptation is realized by means of the automatic changes in the activity of various organism systems (cardiovascular, respiratory, digestive, excretory, endocrine system etc.); behavioral or psychomotor level whereon adaptation is realized in the result of the automatic changes of volume and character of the general motor activity, the changes of mimic, pantomimic, human behavior character; psychological defense level whereon adaptation is realized by means of psychological defense mechanisms activation.

Defense processing of the anxious information facilitates protection of human conscience from traumatic experience and allows to minimize the internal stress and discomfort; coping behavior level whereon adaptation is realized at the cost of personality's realization of the arisen difficulties, the usage of knowledge about how to cope with such situations as well as skills to realize these strategies into practice. Only on this defense level in the complex with other coping strategies, the strategy of solving the concrete problem, which a human has, functions.

The concept of a personality's adaptation mechanisms presented as a whole system of psychological defense and coping mechanisms have been reflected in a new term “defense and coping behavior” which is defined as “a structure-level system comprising of a large amount of elements (mechanisms of psychological defense, behavioral coping-strategies, personal and environmental coping-recourses) interconnected with hierarchy relations and being the low-

order systems regarding to the integrative system of psycho defense and coping” (Koritova, Erjomina, 2015: 46).

According to a number of authors, defense behavior transformation into a certain coping-strategy is provided by reflection which is the basis of target setting, situation logical analysis, concentration on information perception and analysis, its selection. Thus, A. L. Zhuravljov (2007) emphasized the symptom complex of personality’s characteristics when interacting with a new social environment including reflecting on one’s difficulties coping abilities. N. Haan (1977) refers reflection together with thinking, attention concentrating and regulation to the basic personal coping processes.

Contemporary authors in their investigations emphasize that more constructive coping strategies are chosen by those individuals who are capable of the reflexive situation assessment and one’s attitude to it. Thus, L.P. Lubezna (2017) defines reflexive and modeling coping strategies which are characterized not only by problem orientation but also by commitment to perspective. N.S. Yarosh (2017) connects the ability for increase of coping behavior effectiveness with sanogen reflection promoting personality’s emotional reactions harmonization, coping with situation uncertainty, selection of optimal ways of its solving. Reflection development as a necessary condition of optimization of psychological defense constructive mechanisms are considered by M.M. Didukh (2018) and L.S. Protsik (2018).

Specifying the connection of reflection with personality’s development processes in onthogenesis, researchers point at possibility of occurrence of the reflection negative pole (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Thus, A.O. Bekhter (2014) has discovered the existence of the particular “reflection optimum” which facilitates successful coping with professional difficulties. Herewith both low and high levels of reflectiveness have a negative effect on specialists’ coping behavior effectiveness.

The certain confirmation of the unclear role of reflection in coping behavior are the results obtained in investigation by A.I.

Tascheva and S.V. Gridneva (2008) who have been studying the character of connection between reflexive withdrawal and personal displays of disadaptivity of children of primary school age. The researchers have defined that the children with expressed anxiety and sense of guilt appeal to reflexive withdrawal more often. The strategy of reflexive withdrawal of the children with disadaptive fears has appeared to be positively connected with strong social control, developed sense of responsibility, reliability, in other words with their serious attitude to the problem and persistent desire to think over situation to solve it.

In the capacity of the possible solving of a problem of reflexive mechanisms ambivalence, D.O. Leontiev offers the reflection differential model (2014). The model, apart from areflexia (in other words, absence of reflexive processes for the benefit of the full immersion into an external situation), includes three reflexive processes – system reflection, quasi-reflection and introspection. “System reflection is the most volume and multi-sided; though its realization is very complicated it allows to see both a situation of interaction in all the aspects including a subject’s and object’s pole and alternative possibilities” (Leontiev, 2011). Quasi-reflection differs by withdrawal of main stream of conscious from a current situation, concentrating on small details, tendency to fantasy formation. Introspection reflects tendency to the increased attention to one’s own negative feelings and possible undesirable effects of self-actions (Leontiev, 2011).

Therefore, reflection in the works of the contemporary researchers is defined as a key resource of personality’s defense-coping behavior. In the same time, it is emphasized that reflection may discover both productive and counterproductive influence on coping behavior. The given contradiction to be solved needs to define the peculiarities of personality’s defense-coping behavior with different characteristics of reflexive processes.

Aim: defining the structure of defense-coping behavior of young people with different expressiveness and reflexive processes correlation.

Methodology of Research. Investigation of structure of defense-coping behavior of young people with different expressiveness and reflexive processes correlation has been conducted by means of questionnaire “Differential type of reflectiveness” by D.O. Leontiev and E.M. Osin, “Life style index” by R. Plutchik, H. Kellermann, H.R. Conte in adaptation of L. Vasserman, “Coping behavior methods” by R. Lazarus and S. Folkman in adaptation of L. Vasserman, “Coping behavior in stressful situations” by S. Norman, D. Endler, D. James, M. Parker in adaptation of T.L. Krukova. Data mathematical and statistical processing has included k-means cluster analysis and The Person correlation analysis.

The investigation has included 90 persons of 20-30 years old. Among of them: 8 employees of preschool establishments and schools of the city of Kharkiv, 26 employees of the commercial enterprises, 16 office employees, 10 business owners, 15 civil servants, 5 military servants, 10 housewives. The quantity of men and women in the sampling is almost the same (42 and 48 persons).

Results. To define the investigated groups with different characteristics of reflexive processes, the data obtained by means of “Differential test of reflectiveness” have been clustered by k-means method.

According to the clustering results, 3 observation clusters have been singled out. 46,67% of the sampling (42 people) are in the 1st cluster, 31,11% (28 people) are in the 2nd cluster, 22,22% (20 people) are in the 3rd cluster.

On the basis of the obtained average values (table 1) the profiles of the reflexive processes for each of the investigated groups (picture 1).

Table 1

Average values of reflexive processes of the investigated groups corresponding to the defined clusters

Reflection forms	Investigated groups					
	1		2		3	
	\bar{x}	s	\bar{x}	s	\bar{x}	s
System reflection	38,19	5,47	32,20	3,31	44,00	5,29
Introspection	15,52	3,34	25,21	5,62	24,09	3,34
Quasi-reflection	18,05	3,65	28,29	5,83	26,70	4,56

A profile of reflexive processes of cluster 1 is characterized by average values of system reflection, low values of introspection and quasi-reflection.

Thus, young people of the given group are characterized by moderate expressiveness of capacity for self-discipline which makes it possible to see both a pole of an object and of a subject at the same time, namely to take into consideration some peculiarities of a situation and own characteristics, and meanwhile they have no tendency to paying the increased attention to the analysis of their inner world, their feelings, distracting from a current situation, concentrating on some small details.

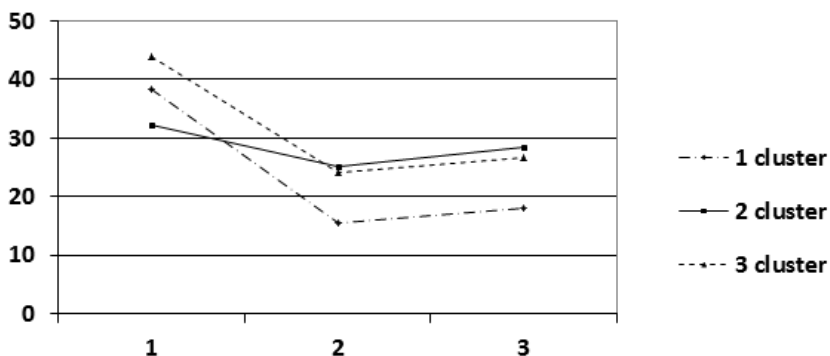


Fig. 1. Profiles of reflexive processes of the investigated people corresponding to the defined clusters

Note: 1 – system reflection, 2 – introspection, 3 – quasi-reflection.

A profile of reflexive processes of cluster 2 is characterized by average low values of system reflection, average high values of introspection and quasi-reflection.

Thus, the given group representatives' most developed reflexive processes are such as quasi-reflection which differs withdrawal of the main stream of conscious from a current situation, concentrating on some small details, tendency to fantasy formation, and introspection reflecting tendency to paying the increased attention to

one's own negative feelings and possible undesirable effects of self-actions. At the same time, the young people from the given group have a weakly expressed system reflection which makes it possible to see both an interaction situation in all its aspects and alternative possibilities (Leontiev, 2011).

A profile of reflexive processes of cluster 3 is characterized by high values of system reflection, average values of introspection and quasi-reflection.

Thus, the given group is characterized by the most expressed system reflection wherein conscious is directed to one-self not at the cost but in addition to its external aim. System reflection is considered as "a whole complete type of reflection which fully performs its positive functions" (Leontiev, 2014; 116). Meanwhile, it is appropriate for the given group representatives to pay attention to one's own inner state as well as to concentrate on an object, which is not directly connected with a current situation.

When investigating the interconnection of psychological defense copings and mechanisms of the group with average level of system reflection, low values of introspection and quasi-reflection (cluster 1) it has been defined that activization of the confrontation coping strategies is directly connected with intensity increase of projection defense mechanism ($r = 0,321$, $p < 0,05$). Activization of the coping strategy of seeking social support is accompanied by intensity increase of regression defense mechanism ($r = 0,336$, $p < 0,05$), and activization of the coping strategy of the planned problem-solving – by intensity increase of denial ($r = 0,365$, $p < 0,05$) and compensation ($r = 0,311$, $p < 0,05$) defense mechanisms. Activization of the emotion-oriented coping is accompanied by intensity increase of repression ($r = 0,553$, $p < 0,001$) and regression ($r = 0,543$, $p < 0,001$) defense mechanisms, and activization of the social distraction coping – by intensity increase of repression defense mechanism ($r = 0,517$, $p < 0,001$).

Activization of the responsibility acceptance coping strategy of the given investigated group is connected with intensity decrease of denial defense mechanism ($r = -0,363$, $p < 0,05$), activization of the positive revaluation coping strategy is connected with intensity

decrease of regression mechanism ($r = -0,343$, $p < 0,05$). Activation of the avoidance-oriented coping is accompanied by intensity decrease of intellectualization defense mechanism ($r = -0,362$, $p < 0,05$), and activation of the distraction coping is accompanied by intensity decrease of reaction formation defense mechanism ($r = -0,328$, $p < 0,05$).

Moreover, the investigated group with system reflection average level, low values of introspection and quasi-reflection (cluster 1) is characterized by connections between the copings and defense mechanisms which can be defined as diverse ones. In this case a particular coping has a positive correlation with some defense mechanisms and has negative correlation with the others.

For cluster 1 the diverse connections are defined with regard to avoidance and problem-solving copings. Thus, activation of the avoidance coping strategy is accompanied by intensity increase of projection defense mechanism ($r = 0,322$, $p < 0,05$) and intensity decrease of repression defense mechanism ($r = -0,408$, $p < 0,01$). Activation of the task-oriented coping is accompanied by intensity increase of intellectualization defense mechanism ($r = 0,331$, $p < 0,05$) and intensity decrease of repression defense mechanism ($r = -0,398$, $p < 0,01$).

The given investigated group has no connections of the defense mechanisms with coping strategies of distancing and self-control as well as coping connections with displacement defense mechanism.

It has been defined in the investigated group with average low level of system reflection and average high level of introspection and quasi-reflection (cluster 2) that activation of the self-control coping strategy is directly connected with intensity increase of projection defense mechanism ($r = 0,528$, $p < 0,1$), and emotion-oriented coping – with intensity increase of regression defense mechanism ($r = 0,315$, $p < 0,05$). Activation of the seeking social support defense mechanism is connected with intensity decrease of intellectualization defense mechanism ($r = -0,382$, $p < 0,05$), activation of avoidance coping strategy – with intensity decrease of repression ($r = -0,314$, $p < 0,05$), compensation ($r = -0,455$, $p < 0,01$) and intellectualization ($r = -0,379$, $p < 0,05$) defense mechanisms. Activation of the task-

oriented coping is accompanied by intensity decrease of displacement defense mechanism ($r = -0,486$, $p < 0,01$). The defense mechanism of reaction formation is negatively connected with avoidance ($r = -0,366$, $p < 0,05$) and distraction ($r = -0,473$, $p < 0,01$) copings.

The diverse connections of copings and defense mechanisms have been defined in the investigated group with average low level of system reflection and average high level of introspection and quasi-reflection (cluster 2) with regard to confrontation, responsibility acceptance, planned problem-solving, positive revaluation copings. Thus, activation of the confrontation coping strategy is accompanied by intensity increase of compensation ($r = 0,304$, $p < 0,05$), projection ($r = 0,358$, $p < 0,05$) and displacement ($r = 0,306$, $p < 0,05$) defense mechanisms, intensity decrease of denial mechanism ($r = -0,359$, $p < 0,05$). Activation of the responsibility acceptance coping strategy is accompanied by intensity increase of displacement defense mechanism ($r = 0,326$, $p < 0,05$), intensity decrease of repression mechanism ($r = -0,496$, $p < 0,01$). Activation of the positive revaluation coping strategy is accompanied by intensity increase of reaction formation defense mechanism ($r = 0,453$, $p < 0,01$) and intensity decrease of regression ($r = -0,334$, $p < 0,05$) and displacement ($r = -0,348$, $p < 0,05$) defense mechanisms. Activation of the planned problem-solving coping strategy is accompanied by intensity increase of denial ($r = -0,343$, $p < 0,05$) and compensation ($r = -0,343$, $p < 0,05$) defense mechanisms and intensity decrease of repression ($r = -0,343$, $p < 0,05$) and displacement ($r = -0,343$, $p < 0,05$) defense mechanisms.

The given investigated group has no connections of the defense mechanisms with coping strategies of distancing and social distraction.

It has been defined in the investigated group with high values of system reflection and average values of introspection and quasi-reflection (cluster 3) that activation of the confrontation coping strategy is directly connected with intensity increase of projection defense mechanism ($r = 0,459$, $p < 0,05$). Intensity of the compensation defense mechanism increases alongside with tendency

of the investigated young people to using the seeking social support ($r = 0,652$, $p < 0,01$) and responsibility acceptance ($r = 0,473$, $p < 0,05$) coping strategies. Activization of the planned problem-solving coping strategy is accompanied by intensity increase of denial ($r = 0,529$, $p < 0,05$) and intellectualization ($r = 0,499$, $p < 0,05$) defense mechanisms. Activization of the task-oriented coping is also accompanied by intensity increase of the same mechanisms: denial ($r = 0,630$, $p < 0,01$) and intellectualization ($r = 0,657$, $p < 0,01$). Intensity increase of regression mechanism has direct correlation with activation of emotion-oriented ($r = 0,483$, $p < 0,05$) and avoidance-oriented ($r = 0,464$, $p < 0,05$) copings. Activization of the social distraction coping has direct correlation with intensity increase of compensation defense mechanism ($r = 0,594$, $p < 0,01$).

Intensity decrease of the repression defense mechanism is connected with activation of distancing ($r = -0,626$, $p < 0,01$) and avoidance ($r = -0,558$, $p < 0,05$) coping strategies. Activization of self-control and positive revaluation coping strategies has direct correlation with intensity decrease of regression ($r = -0,675$, $p < 0,01$ and $r = -0,765$, $p < 0,01$) and displacement ($r = -0,462$, $p < 0,05$ та $r = -0,868$, $p < 0,01$) defense mechanisms.

No diverse connections of copings and defense mechanisms have been defined in the investigated group with high values of system reflection and average values of introspection and quasi-reflection (cluster 3). The given investigated group is characterized with absence of connections of defense mechanisms with distraction coping.

Discussion. When investigating the connections of copings and psychological defense mechanisms it has been defined that activation of copings can be connected with intensity increase of the particular defense mechanisms, with intensity decrease of the particular defense mechanisms or coping and defense mechanisms connections can be diverse when activation of the particular coping is connected with intensity increase of some defense mechanisms and decrease of the others.

If to rely upon the views according to which psychological defense mechanisms are the basis of the particular coping options

(Nikolska, 2011) and personal factors of coping behavior specifying perception of the objective preconditions of its formation (Nikonenko, 2017) and being a whole regulatory system with coping strategies (Petrova, 2014; Maricutoiu, Crasovan, 2016; Panfill, 2020), the most consistency in this system functioning is defined in the group of young people with high values of system reflection, average values of introspection and quasi-reflection with no diverse connections between copings and psychological defense mechanisms. The number of positive and negative connections between copings and defense mechanisms of the young people with average values of system reflection, low values of introspection and quasi-reflection practically corresponds to the previously investigated group, but the given group, in contrast to the previous one, has the diverse connections between copings and defense mechanisms. The results obtained in the groups of young people with high and average values of system reflection confirm point according to which the process of personality's adaptation is provided by personality's reflexive abilities as in the process of reflecting on a difficult situation or one's own behavior in it a personality is able to successfully release from psychological defense, changing defense behavior into self-regulation (Pakulina, 2010).

The biggest number of connections of copings and defense mechanisms in general, apart from diverse and negative ones, is defined in the investigated group with average low level of system reflection and average high level of introspection and quasi-reflection. Thus, a personality's tendency to pay increased attention to one's own feelings and states as well as attention focused on oneself and reflecting a specific cognitive style when the introspective experience gains an advantage over the experience stemming from the outer world (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, Lyubomirsky, 2008), has a negative influence on defense-coping behavior functioning.

Conclusions. Three groups of young people with different character of reflexive processes correlation have been defined. The biggest group is characterized by average level of system reflection, low level of introspection and quasi-reflection. The second group is

presented by the young people who differ by average low level of system reflection, average high level of introspection and quasi-reflection. The smallest group is characterized by high level of system reflection, average level of introspection and quasi-reflection.

The investigated group with average low level of system reflection and average high level of introspection and quasi-reflection has the biggest number of connections between copings and defense mechanisms as well as diverse ones. At the same time, no diverse connections between copings and defense mechanisms have been found in the group of young people with high values of system reflection, average values of introspection and quasi-reflection that is an evidence of more conformity of the defense-coping behavior structure of the given group.

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