

# Formalizing the use of training methods in developing a career path

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## Abstract

Coaching methods are aimed at motivating people to achieve career or social skills. Therewith, coaching acts only as an additional form of career development for persons engaged in certain professions. The novelty of the study lies in the need to apply coaching methods not only during the period of active career implementation, but also during its interruption. This study is aimed at implementing the program for the development of career competence, the main tasks of which are to independently regulate professional life in a wide range of development vectors. The leading methods are the theoretical method of analysis and empirical methods of questioning and observation, which allow to study the impact of coaching on a person's professional development. The study shows that career development opportunities should be based on the psychological readiness of a person and, if necessary, on the correction of such readiness by means of psychological methods.

## KEYWORDS

career development, career strategy, personality, practical skills, professional selection, self-fulfillment, transactional analysis

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Career growth is seldom a direct path based on stepping up the professional and social hierarchy. Typical signs of a career are more or less prolonged stops in progressive development, abrupt changes in the direction of self-fulfillment, voluntary rejection of opportunities for advancement, loss of existing achievements, and a temporary return to the previous level. The concept of "career interruption" requires clarification, which includes significant

events and decisions that lead to a change in the progressive trajectory and a positive vector of the career path (Zobenko, 2020). This term is rarely used in the psychological literature, but there are numerous related phenomena that fit into the understanding of the phenomenon of interruption described above: professional and life crises; career barriers; voluntary dismissal or involuntary job loss; professional maladjustment, stagnation and destruction; career plateau syndrome, etc. (Bocheliuk et al., 2020; Cherepania et al., 2019).

Most often, the source of career interruption is professional crises that emerge at various stages of the professional path, reflect its specific patterns, and lead to changes in the pace or vector of development. In general, mental development cannot be considered separately from crisis phenomena, because the initial source of any changes are internal contradictions that arise in life and activities. Dialectical conflicts (mismatch between internal and external reality, contradiction between actual and possible) naturally lead to the transformation of the psychological structure of the personality. Fixing in the form of neoplasms, these changes determine the course of further human development. Each crisis indicates the end of a certain stage of life and the transition to the next (Serman, 2018).

Within the framework of an individual biography, these types of crises most often interact with each other, forming a complex of difficulties, losses and obstacles (Norris-Tirrell et al., 2018). The mechanism of their conjugation does not yet have a clear scientific explanation. The coincidence of crises leads to an increase in their acuteness and conflict: the interference of random external events on the life and professional scenario of a person causes chaos, maladjustment, and a violation of the developmental line (Ahmed, 2018; Baimanova et al., 2019). The relative nature of this influence is noted: a person adapts to some situations, actively opposes others, and simply takes some of them into account for the future (Wu et al., 2018). A combination of an experience of professional failure (stagnation or contradiction) that coincides in time with normative crises of adulthood or significant life events is a likely source of career termination decisions (Davis et al., 2019; Sidorenkov et al., 2020).

Crises of professional development are defined as short-term (up to a year) periods of cardinal restructuring of consciousness, activity, and behavior of an individual, which lead to a reorientation to new goals, correction and revision of social and professional position, a change in the ways of performing activities, relations with others, and in some cases—to a change of profession (Liu et al., 2021). The main signs of crises are as follows (Fournier et al., 2011):

- due to imbalance, disorganization or loss of personal ties with the professional environment and work;
- initiated by external circumstances or by the person themselves;
- are described by changes in psychological well-being, often in social, professional, and material status;
- accompanied by a state of mental tension and deep emotional experiences.

Situational crises are associated with career development barriers – psychological phenomena (manifested in the form of sensations, experiences, images, concepts, etc.), which reflect the properties of some objects to limit the manifestation of a person's activity, hinder the satisfaction of their needs (Barsegyan, 2019). The following barriers include lack of information, lack of professionally significant qualities, fatigue, maladjustment, remoteness of the desired event, incidents at work, etc. (Stein, 1994). The inability to implement a professional plan, which is accompanied by stress and the actualization of the need for self-affirmation lead to a state of temporary stagnation (Padela, 2021).

Although psychological barriers constitute an essential attribute of professional development, their function in this process is ambiguous (Hosein & Rao, 2017). The barriers that accompany career development perform stabilizing, correcting, energizing, mobilizing, developing, inhibiting, and suppressing functions. They give the process of professional development a personal meaning, stimulate the development of activities and relations (Li et al., 2020). However, the insurmountable, objectively and subjectively difficult barriers lead to professional identity self-destruction (Berdanier & Zerbe, 2019). The growth and development of the subject of activity can stop if the negative influences of the environment exceed the limit of emotional endurance (Xu et al., 2018). The

subject of labor and the labor post are considered as conflicting realities (Habig et al., 2020). Apart from the developmental consequences of the conflict, there are undesirable effects: a decrease in the efficiency of the production system (mistakes, accidents, diseases, injuries, discord in the team); disappointment and dismissal from the organization, unconscious consequences in the form of violations of professional development (chronic dissatisfaction, depression, a sense of hopelessness, meaningless work, "neurosis of postponed life").

A person's compliance with the requirements of a job post has a complex structure that includes physical, cognitive, communicative, spatial, temporal, and energetic limitations (Takaku, 2020). The most difficult thing is to identify the discrepancy between the work and personal qualities, ideals, beliefs, and attitudes. It is these regulators that determine the sharp turns of the professional path (Yount et al., 2020). On the other hand, different cultures (family, organizational) have their "repertoires" of the properties of the subject of activity (Duarte et al., 2016). There is a natural professional selection process (Rajecki & Borden, 2011; Zinchenko et al., 2020). Once involved in work, people are faced with the facts of the success of their work, satisfaction with it (Kim, 2013; Zeer et al., 2020). As a result, they "find themselves," gain a foothold and develop along this path, or are eliminated from the corresponding area of employment. Options for such a spontaneous professional selection are as follows:

1. Forced change of occupation for external reasons, independent of the individual (unemployment, material need, lack of information, etc); as a result of a decision due to the awareness of failure in the chosen activity; due to loss of health.
2. Voluntary change with prospects for further development: a situation that opens up new career opportunities or rethinking their competencies in connection with the experience gained.
3. Consolidation on the professional path: finding new meanings of activity and ways of adaptation; transformation of the conventional image of the profession (improvement of conditions, means of labor, its organization, etc). In a situation of professional failure, a person can begin to more deeply and versatile weigh further decisions, learn a new attitude to important aspects of life. In this case, career delays are transformed into the birth of new development prospects.

This study explores the general features of career growth; the study also develops working plans for the blocks of the program, which form an impact on career growth; the effectiveness of the program is analyzed, an analysis of changes in professional life is presented two months after the end of the program; conclusions are drawn.

## 2 | MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study presents a general training plan, improved and revised in accordance with the results of approbation. The introductory part covers the presentation of the objectives of the program, the encouragement of vigorous activity to achieve the expected results. Participants get acquainted and, together with the trainer, agree on the rules of group interaction. In the study, the control group comprised 10 teachers (this number of people is enough to conduct research) from school No. 179 in Moscow. The study involved female primary school teachers.

Block 1. "Career as a personal autobiographical project of the personality" includes 8 h of group lessons and 2 h of individual consultations (Table 1). The main goal at this stage is to develop an understanding of professional advancement as a necessary condition for the development of an adult. This presupposes: broadening the understanding of careers and career opportunities in the modern labor market; understanding of one's responsibility for professional advancement; personalization and optimization of professional path. The first block of the program introduces the participants to the variety of career strategies; expands and systematizes ideas about the factors influencing the promotion; reveals the role of professional crises as necessary stages of development; develops a balanced view of one's career potential, resources and limitations of the existing situation of professional

**TABLE 1** Work plan for the first block of the influence program “Career as a personal autobiographical project”

No.	Lesson content	Time, min.
1	Introductory lesson	
1.1	Opening speech, presentation of the program	15
1.2	Discussion and approval of the rules of group interaction	10
1.3	Introducing participants: exercise “my name”	20–30
1.4	Exercise “Number off in ones and twos”	10
1.5	Minilecture “Modern ideas about the career path”	25
1.6	Group discussion	25
	Homework (compile a career promotion portfolio)	
2	Analysis of individual career path	
2.1	Minilecture “Career Stages and Crises”	30
2.2	Group discussion of universal human needs that are consistently implemented at different stages of a career	30
2.3	Building a career	30
2.4	Discussion of results in pairs and in a group	20
2.5	Exercise “Metaphorisation—a binding thread”	10
	Homework (psychological diagnostics of career potential)	
3	Analysis of factors of career and professional development (Part 1)	
3.1	Minilecture “External factors of career development”	25
3.2	Discussion of the beneficial and limiting influences of external factors from the participants' experience	5–6 min per participant
3.3	Exercise “Ideal work situation”	5
3.4	Projective technique “Sheep on the mountain” (self-analysis of the professional situation)	20
3.5	Building career prospects, group discussion	20
	Homework (collecting information about the available opportunities for professional and career advancement in the organization)	
4	Analysis of factors of career and professional development (Part 2)	
4.1	Homework discussion	3–4 min per participant
4.2	Exercise “Understanding Success in Life”	20
4.3	Minilecture “Internal factors of career development”	35
4.4	Exercise “My Strengths”	5
4.5	Practice “Internal resources of success”	15
4.6	Written practice “Competence Profile,” discussion	15
	Homework (continuation of the exercise “My strengths,” development of life-learning resources)	

development; demonstrates alternative ways of personality self-fulfillment inside and outside the organization. Each lesson contains a minilecture followed by a discussion of information.

In the practical part, the participants perform an introspection of the situation of their professional development, build career profiles, determine personal resources and leading motives in building a professional career, and build a “zone of proximal development” of their competencies. Homework involves drawing up a career portfolio, collecting information about the available opportunities for professional and career advancement in the organization, attainable resources for expansion and advanced training (Stepanenko & Antonova, 2019).

Block 2. “Design of an individual career strategy and professional development program” is designed for 10 h of group lessons, two individual meetings with a psychologist-coach (additional consultations are appointed if necessary) (Table 2). The main goal at this stage is to develop individual career strategies and programs based on life perspectives. This presupposes research of participants' intrinsic motivation as a basis for building career strategies; determination and coordination of the place of professional goals in the general life perspective of the individual, the development of clear, conscious goal-setting skills with the subsequent construction of a flexible program of professional (career) development; psychological preparation for the presence of obstacles and their overcoming. Homework involves drawing up a career portfolio, collecting information on the available opportunities for professional and career advancement in the organization, attainable resources for expansion and advanced training.

The second block of the program is practically oriented. It contains various methods of psychological diagnostics of personality orientation (questionnaire, projective techniques, practical exercises). The main attention is paid to modern technologies for modeling an individual strategy for professional and career development: mind-map, SMART-planning, coaching methods. It is important that at this stage the participants proceed directly to concrete actions to implement the developed career programs. At the beginning of each meeting, they report on their progress towards the set goal, receiving psychological support from the group and from the facilitator.

Block 3. “Overcoming barriers and solving problems on the career path” is based on the principles and methods of cognitive-behavioral therapy (Table 3). This part of the work is focused on understanding the stereotypes that act as barriers to the implementation of career plans. Each lesson contains a theoretical block—mini-lectures and discussions that explain how thoughts provoke emotional and behavioral problems. Psychological exercises aim to find out beliefs that stimulate or limit professional development, as well as change the way of thinking for positive personal and professional changes.

During 10 h of group meetings, participants develop skills to recognize internal reactions, identify cognitions that interfere with their career development; realize (formulate) and transform the elements of their life and professional philosophy; master the techniques of self-regulation of emotional states. Homework helps to effectively reinforce these transformations. At individual meetings, the study of life and professional problems continues. Block 4 “Parental factor” is designed for 8 h of group and 4 h of individual lessons, it is aimed at solving psychological problems caused by early family influences. The parental attitude determines the inner resources of the individual (manifestations of subjectivity—an active attitude to one's fate or submission to external circumstances; self-attention and self-worth; attitude towards the outside world, the choice of strategies to overcome life's difficulties) and affects many career processes. The techniques of work at this stage are borrowed from the transactional analysis of E. Berne (1964) (modern ideas about scenario patterns and ego states of the personality), the methods of symbol-drama and gestalt exercises are used. The practice of assistance in transactional analysis is based on the fact that a scenario decision made in early childhood can be changed by over-decision (actualization of the personal Ego-state of an Adult) (Shmelev & Rozhdestvenskaya, 2016).

The theoretical part explains how the first experience of relationships with parents continues to influence the nature of thoughts and feelings, professional relationships, and decisions. In practical exercises, the participants get acquainted in detail with the structural parts of their personality: Child, parent, and adult; analyze the manifestations of Ego states in professional life; learn to recognize overlapping transactions and understand the conflicts behind them; acquire the skills of optimal use and coordination of ego positions in various situations (Table 4).

**TABLE 2** Work plan for the second block of the influence program “Design of an individual career program”

No.	Lesson content	Time, min.
1	Internal values and needs for career development	
1.1	Keynote speech	5
1.2	Leading values and lifestyle methodology	15
1.3.	Exercise “Poverty and wealth”	20
1.4	Diagnostic practice “Wheel of motivation”	45
1.5.	Group discussion “Professional mobility or professional stability?”	30
2	Optimizing life prospects	
2.1.	Game-metaphor “By the will of the wind”, discussion	10
2.2	Demonstration “Why set goals?”	5
2.3	Exercise “Inventory of life goals and desires,” group discussion	40
2.4	Exercise “Five Why?”	15
2.5	Game “Magic Shop”	15
2.6	Mind-map technique in planning the path to the goal, discussion in pairs	20 + 15
	Homework (presentation of professional goals)	
3	SMART planning	
3.1	Homework discussion	5–6 min per participant
3.2	Exercise “Arrow”	10
3.3	Acquaintance with SMART planning technology (Minilecture)	20
3.4	Practical task “False goals”	5
3.5	Drawing up an individual program for professional and career development	25
3.6	Repetition of the exercise “Arrow,” discussion of the dynamics of the image	5
	Homework	
4	Roadmap of the future	
4.1	Drawing up a picture-collage that details, clarifies and consolidates the image of the desired career path in the mind	120
	Homework: the implementation of the first step towards the goal	
5	Obstacles to the goal	
5.1	Homework discussion	3–4 min per participant
5.2	Exercise-visualization “Difficulties on the way to the goal”	15
5.3	Demonstration game “Skeptic, Realist, Dreamer”	25-30
5.4	Playing internal dialogs with changing positions	25
5.5	Written practice “Agreement with oneself”	15
	Homework: implementation of career programs, discussion	

**TABLE 3** Work plan for the third block of the influence program "Overcoming barriers on the career path"

No.	Lesson content	Time, min.
1	Beliefs that predetermine a career path	
1.1	Minilecture. An introductory explanation to cognitive therapy. ABC Formula	25
1.2	Practical task "Guess the thoughts"	15
1.3	Exercise to form an inner state	10
1.4	Discussion of professional problems	5–6 min per participant
1.5	Exercise "Life destructive thoughts"	15
	Homework: identifying attitudes and beliefs	
2	Transformation of internal attitudes and beliefs	
2.1	Minilecture "Varieties of internal interpretations"	30
2.2	Exercise: "If you change B, then C changes"	15
2.3	Practice: "Negative emotions at work" (Work in pairs)	20
2.4	Exercise "Search for the inner source of suffering"	25
2.5	Practice "Change emotions with thoughts"	25
	Homework: keep track of stereotypes of your thinking and the emotions caused by them; practice emotional self-regulation	
3	Career expectations, beliefs, and myths	
3.1	Homework discussion	40–50
3.2	Technique for determining personal expectations, group discussion	25
3.3	Exercise: "My current professional problem"	10
3.4	Analysis of the results in a group, discussion of possible solutions to problems in the general context of expectations	20
3.5	Self-efficacy determination technique	20
3.6	Practice "Winners' rules"	25
	Homework: a list of individual ideas, attitudes and philosophy	
4	Rationalizing hidden beliefs	
4.1	Attribution technique	20
4.2	Self-diagnosis of the locus of control (questionnaire on the level of subjective control)	25
4.3	Technique for identifying hidden beliefs	10
4.4	Exercise-discussion "Myths and stereotypes of a career"	30
4.5	Exercise "Inventory of problems"	15
4.6	Technique of positive attitude towards problems	20
	Homework: a diary of mistakes and their positive reevaluation	
5	Cognition map	
5.1	Exercise "List of defining events and life values"	25
5.2	Exercise "Cognitive belief map"	40

(Continues)

**TABLE 3** (Continued)

No.	Lesson content	Time, min.
5.3	Exercise "Counterarguments"	25
5.4	Practice "Life of my dreams"	30
Homework: keep observing and adjusting attitudes		

Particular attention is paid to deciphering one's life scenario, its consistent transformation. The main task of a psychologist-coach at this stage is to find out parental script messages, demonstrate how they affect the current situation and help a person free themselves from imposed script patterns.

The final block contains business games and practical exercises aimed at developing the skills of effective professional self-presentation and business communication (from drawing up a resume and formulating an oral business card to defending one's opinion in acute conflict interaction). The total duration of the exercises is 8 h, they can be alternated with the techniques of the fifth block, aimed at activating internal resources and mastering the techniques of emotional self-regulation (Table 5).

At the last lesson, the participants discuss the performance of the work, impressions, express their gratitude and wishes to other group members. Participants fill out posttraining questionnaires. The group work ends with the resource exercise "Meeting of graduates." The participants take turns sitting in front of the audience, others should imagine that they met in 5–10 years and tell how they imagine the future of this person. The most expected results of the formative–corrective influence are the activation of the participants and the initiation of real professional changes in accordance with the prepared career development program. It is also expected that participation in the program should ultimately have a beneficial effect on the general psychological well-being of the subjects, since this parameter is an integral criterion of life satisfaction.

### 3 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the last lesson of the group cycle, the participants filled out post-training questionnaires, in which they expressed their subjective impressions of the effectiveness of the work done. The first question of the questionnaire concerned the assessment of one's career competence (the ability to clearly understand one's career potential, build an appropriate development program and consistently implement it, overcome the difficulties that arise along the way) before and after completing the program. According to the given marks on a 10-point scale, all participants noted a positive effect. The average mark before the start of the program was 3.6 points, immediately after its end—7, after another 2 months—7.3 points. The dynamics of self-assessment of career competence are particularly interesting. Total, 40.0% of the participants experienced a double or more increase in their ability. At the end of the program, two of the respondents rated the acquired level of competence with the highest marks of 9–10 points, which may indicate excessive expectations and an uncritical perception of their positive achievements.

After the "trial by practice," the estimates became more balanced. Two months after the end of the program, the growth of self-esteem of career competence generally continued, although it became less dynamic. The reason for such dynamics is the introduction of career programs in professional activity, the encounter with the first difficulties, a realistic assessment of one's career potential. Four out of ten participants continued individual counseling after the end of the group sessions. This experience allows to confidently assert that the implementation of professional aspirations significantly changes the entire way of life, often accompanied by a restructuring of family relations, a change in established habits, and the assimilation of new social roles. All this determines the relevance of psychological support at the first stages of the implementation of career plans. The dynamics of assessing one's interest in work after the end of the program turned out to be relatively moderate.

**TABLE 4** Work plan of the fourth block of the influence program "Parent factor"

No.	Lesson content	Time, min.
1	Introduction to transactional analysis (concept of life scenarios and ego states)	
1.1	Psychological game: "Travel to the mountains" (about life scenarios and ego states)	10
1.2	Minilecture "Personality structure in transactional analysis"	30
1.3	A practical task for recognizing ego states	10
1.4	Self-diagnosis of leading ego states. Questionnaire	20
1.5	Exercise "My Ego States"	30
1.6	Recognizing overlapping transactions	20
	Homework: actualizing the natural child	
2	Personalities within me: Child, parent, adult	
2.1	Exercise "Touch your childhood"	
2.2	The practice of "children's" perception of the world	
2.3	Exercise "Children's types of adaptation" (work in pairs)	20
2.4	Exercise "Touching the Father"	15
2.5	Exercise "Father who is always with me"	25–30
2.6	Writing practice "Ask your Adult"	10
2.7	Exercise "Portrait of ego states" (15 min)	15
2.8	Method for solving problems from an adult position	20
	Homework: Writing practice "Adult questions about life"	
3	Life scenarios	
3.1	Meeting the winner and the loser	20
3.2	Self-diagnosis of a life scenario. Trait checklist	10
3.3	Winner/defeated scale	5
3.4	Exercise-visualization "The play of your life"	20
3.5	Exercise "Life scenes"	10
3.6	Exercise "List of actors"	10
3.7	Exercise "Cultural and Family Scenario"	15
3.8	Exercise "Non-verbal and verbal messages of the family script"	15
3.9	Exercise "Parental recognition"	15
	Homework: analyzing the professional life of parents and grandparents	
	Lesson 4. Transformation of a life scenario	
4.1	Practice "Careerogram in the family"	30
4.2	Exercise "Script modification"	20
4.3	Exercise "Escaping the trap," group discussion	25–30
4.4	Exercise "Future Me" group discussion	20–25
4.5	Structuring time	10
4.6	Visualization exercise "The strength of your kind"	10

**TABLE 5** The list of exercises of the fifth block of the influence program “Mobilization of internal resources for career advancement”

No.	Exercise content	Time, min.
1	Written practice “How am I different from others?”	10
2	Written practice “List of personal resources”	15
3	Written practice “Encouragement at work”	10
4	Exercise “Working as a mission,” group discussion	25
5	Exercise “Professional life line”	30
6	Associative technique “Resource states,” discussion	30
7	Exercise “The seasons of my soul,” discussion	30
8	Psychological attitude “Working with the elements”	10
9	Psychological attitude “Bob”	5
10	Exercise “Meeting of graduates”	5–6 min per participant

Overall, it is positive and stable. It is important that the growth of interest in professional activity was observed among all participants even two months after completing the program. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that professional actions acquire personal meaning, participants discover new spheres of self-fulfillment for themselves, their professional life becomes more diverse.

The next question in the questionnaire asked how useful were the various components of the program for the participants. Participants rated them on a five-point scale (from 0 “absolutely useless” to 5 “extremely useful and important”). The average scores in the group are presented in Table 6. Consideration of the scores obtained allows to describe the participants' impressions as being consistent with the envisaged objectives of the program. The first block is mostly informative; the second has a diagnostic and practical orientation, the third is focused on overcoming the existing problems of career development, the fourth has an integral effect on almost all mental spheres. It is important that all blocks have noticeable positive effects in relation to all the proposed evaluation criteria: they contain useful information, form new practical skills and competencies, promote self-knowledge, have a positive effect on motivation and emotional regulation, help overcome existing problems.

In general, the second, third, fourth, and sixth blocks of the program received the highest marks in terms of a set of criteria. They have potential as separate training cycles that can be implemented in organizations and universities. Individual consultations were highly appreciated by the participants according to the criteria of “correction and overcoming existing problems,” “motivation, emotional regulation,” and “self-knowledge.” Since the effectiveness depends on the qualifications and professional orientation of the consultant, these estimates are considered exclusively as part of a separate experiment.

Two months after filling out the posttraining questionnaire, the study showed to what extent the information and practical skills mastered by the participants in the program turned out to be relevant and in demand in terms of professional self-fulfillment. In general, none of the content blocks of the program turned out to be irrelevant, two months after the end of the work, the participants well remembered the information they received, used the skills they received. More than half of the respondents noted that the acquired competencies have become a permanent practice and have a positive effect in the implementation of professional ideas. Individual consultations have the most expressive prolonged effect (Table 7).

Among the individual occupations and psychological practices, there are those that later confirmed their usefulness in professional life. As the most effective moments of the program, the participants noted the following: identifying internal needs and leading values implemented in professional life (Block 2), psychological preparation

**TABLE 6** Average ratings of the components of the program among the participants in the experiment (N = 10)

	Criteria for evaluation Necessary and useful information	Self-knowledge	New skills, practical skills, competences	Motivation, emotional regulation	Correction and overcoming existing problems
Block 1. "Career as an autobiographical project"	4.5	4.0	2.5	2.4	2.6
Block 2. "Design your career program"	5.0	4.8	4.8	3.1	3.3
Block 3. "Overcoming career barriers"	4.8	4.8	3.2	3.9	5.0
Block 4. "Parental factor"	4.9	5.0	3.5	3.8	4.8
Block 5. "Mobilization of internal resources"	3.2	3.8	3.6	4.7	4.2
Block 6. "Self-presentation and business communication"	4.6	4.4	5.0	3.2	4.6
Individual consultations	2.2	4.5	3.2	4.6	5

for the presence of obstacles and overcoming them, reducing the fear of failure (Blocks 2, 3, and 5), neutralizing negative family scenarios (Block 4), correction of restrictive attitudes and transformation of life philosophy (Block 3), development of skills for self-presentation of one's professional position and achievements in a professional environment (Block 6).

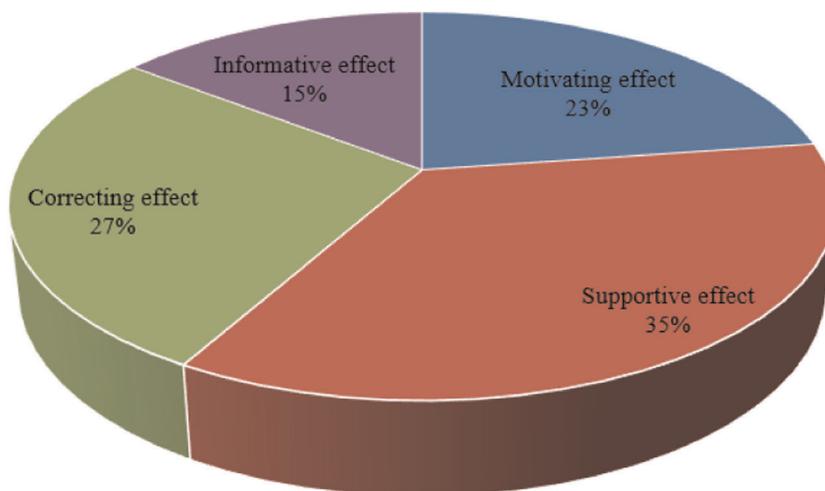
Apart from the content of the program itself, the participants highly appreciated the therapeutic effect of group communication. In the next question of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to distribute 20 points in relation to four criteria of influence: supporting effect (psychological support, feeling of acceptance); corrective effect (assistance in solving specific problems and difficulties); informative effect (obtaining useful knowledge and information, expanding experience), and motivating effect (inspiration, stimulation of activity). According to the total estimates obtained (Figure 1), the effects of psychological support and motivation for professional development are manifested most in group communication.

Post-training questionnaires contained open-ended questions, respondents were asked to indicate specific professional changes that occurred to them during two months of participation in the program and the next two months of independent career self-fulfillment. Based on the results of summarizing the data obtained (content analysis), the program participants name from 3 to 7 real events in their professional life (Table 8). In four months of observation, as a result of the career development program, three employees received a significant promotion (one received a new offer, two agreed to an offer that scared them before). Two more announced their career intentions in the organizations where they work and at the time of the survey were waiting for the promised promotion or looking for career alternatives in other organizations. During the course of the program, three participants increased the range and complexity of their professional tasks; two months after its completion, they actively supported this vector of development. In general, a horizontal career (active promotion without an official promotion, is associated with the expansion of professional functions, an increase in earnings and authority), was recorded at 60%, in half of the cases, specialists initiated and started their projects in organizations where they work.

Eighty percent of those surveyed within two months after the end of the program noted an improvement in their financial situation due to an increase in the level of wages (fees), expanding the client base, improving products and services, and receiving bonuses. Presentation of achievements and professional successes has become a common practice for program participants. After the end of the experiment, 90% of

**TABLE 7** Evaluation of the program components two months after the end of the experiment ( $N = 10$ , absolute values and %)

	How relevant was the information and practical skills you mastered during the program in life?				
	irrelevant, I have already partially forgotten what was discussed and what I did in the classroom	irrelevant, but I remember a lot and use it when necessary	I remember the information well, I tried to use it once or twice	I remember almost everything, I use it from time to time, as needed (with a different effect)	it has become a constant practice and habit; I use the information and feel a positive effect
Block 1	–	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
Block 2	–	–	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
Block 3	–	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)
Block 4	–	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)
Block 5	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
Block 6	–	–	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)
Individual consultations	–	–	–	8 (80%)	2 (20%)



**FIGURE 1** Distribution of estimates by the effects of group interaction of participants

**TABLE 8** Changes in professional life during and 2 months after the end of the program ( $N = 10$ , absolute values)

	From start to finish of the program (2 months)	After the end of the program (2 months)
Change of position and content of activity (horizontal direction)	3	6
Change of position and content of activity (vertical direction)	1	2
Applying for a change of position and content of activities	2	2
Improved financial situation	2	8
Rapprochement with management, expansion of useful business contacts	2	3
Improvement of the qualification level	0	2
Retraining. Obtaining additional skills in related areas	1	3
Presentation of professional achievements	7	9
Participation in professional competitions	1	1
Receiving new interesting offers, expanding career alternatives	8	5
Solving long-standing conflicts and overcoming career barriers	3	2
The emergence of conflicts in the professional environment	1	2
Change of job with the prospect of growth	0	1

them implement the acquired competences through performances in the media, at professional seminars and conferences, in social networks. As a result, they receive numerous professional offers: participation in professional projects, an invitation to work in the private sector, an influx of individual clients. Notably, there is a slight increase in conflict, which was observed during and after the program. Overall, 30% of participants reported deteriorating relationships in a professional environment. A deeper analysis of these cases showed that conflicts were provoked by an open demonstration of a certain professional position, as well as defending their interests, which the participants had previously conceded. Career advancement in the organizational system often provokes resistance from colleagues and even direct management (which considers career intentions as an encroachment on their position). This pattern must be considered in further studies.

One of the study participants changed jobs a week after the end of the program: he received a higher position and expanded the scope of professional powers. At the same time, four participants who, during the initial interview, indicated that they want radical changes (to interrupt their careers because they are extremely dissatisfied with the conditions and results of work) found opportunities for professional self-fulfillment within their organization: they moved to other departments, started their creative projects, changed the operating mode. This is a watered-down version of professional mobility, which is accompanied by easy adaptation of the employee; but the company does not lose a specialist, and finds more effective ways to use human resources.

In the context of the experience gained in career self-fulfillment, the participants determined what meanings and problems involved in the program were incomplete and required further refinement. The proposals worthy of attention include correction of career plans and appropriate behavior when faced with insurmountable barriers, the impact of professional growth on family relationships, psychological readiness to change the social role, optimization of mental and physical stress while expanding professional tasks. Thus, in the questionnaires and in oral feedback, 100% of the participants highly appreciated the effectiveness of the program, which is confirmed by real changes and achievements in professional life. Expressive effects during the implementation of the program relate to the growth of self-efficacy of specialists, the expansion of ideas about achievable career alternatives, an active presentation of their achievements and competences. It is important that the positive results are stable—the prolonged effect is manifested in the growth of qualifications, a significant expansion of the scope of professional tasks and competences, improvement of material well-being, and gaining recognition and authority in the professional environment. There is a noticeable increase in interest in the work held during the entire observation period.

The study implemented a classic experimental study design, where several indicators were compared before and after the formative influence in the experimental and control groups. Two authoritative psychodiagnostic tools were used: The professional self-fulfillment questionnaire and the psychological well-being scale. In the experimental group, testing took place three times: before the start of the experiment, immediately after the end of the program, and after nine weeks. To assess the differences in the shift of signs, the Wilcoxon *T* test was used, which allows to establish not only the degree of changes as a result of the formative influence, but also their direction. The control group comprised 10 people—participants in the summative stage of the study, who did not express interest in the training program and continued their career development in the usual way. Testing took place twice: at the summative stage of the study and at the end of the formative stage (the difference between measurements was 10–12 weeks). A comparative analysis of the results of the questionnaire in the experimental group is convincing evidence of the growth of professional self-fulfillment in many parameters (Table 9).

Table 9 shows that immediately after completing the program, several indicators significantly improve— aspects of interprofessional self-fulfillment: the presence of a project of professional development ( $p = 0.007$ ), the development of a life-professional space ( $p = 0.033$ ). Some parameters of external professional self-fulfillment underwent a significant transformation: recognition of the specialist's achievements by the professional

**TABLE 9** The results of diagnostics of professional self-fulfillment in the experimental group ( $N = 10$ ,  $M \pm SD$ )

Scales of the questionnaire of professional self-fulfillment	I testing before the start	II testing immediately after the study	III testing 9–10 weeks after the study
The need for professional development	7.21 ± 2.03	7.96 ± 1.82*	8.55 ± 2.26**
Availability of a project of professional development	5.46 ± 2.84	7.92 ± 1.75**	8.73 ± 1.41**
Prevailing satisfaction with personal professional achievements	5.82 ± 2.75	6.45 ± 1.82	6.98 ± 1.76
Constantly setting new professional goals	8.12 ± 2.54	8.54 ± 1.53	8.34 ± 1.35
Development of individual life and professional space	6.76 ± 1.37	7.58 ± 1.47*	8.27 ± 1.25**
The level of interprofessional self-fulfillment	33.16 ± 8.82	38.24 ± 5.56**	40.67 ± 5.63**
Achievement of the set professional goals	7.42 ± 1.86	7.86 ± 0.87	8.76 ± 1.16*
Recognition of the achievements of a specialist by the professional community	7.95 ± 1.28	8.73 ± 1.24**	9.35 ± 1.14**
Use of professional experience and achievements by other specialists	6.73 ± 1.76	7.72 ± 1.45**	8.50 ± 1.14**
Disclosure of personal potential and abilities in the profession	8.95 ± 1.50	9.18 ± 2.11	9.46 ± 1.89**
Manifestation of a high level of creativity in professional activities	7.92 ± 1.81	8.16 ± 2.05	8.92 ± 1.77*
The level of external professional self-fulfillment	38.23 ± 3.84	41.31 ± 4.28**	44.65 ± 3.74**
General level of professional self-fulfillment	71.33 ± 10.62	79.51 ± 9.05**	85.24 ± 8.15**

Note: statistically significant parameter shift in comparison with the first measurement.

\* $p \leq 0.05$ .

\*\* $p \leq 0.01$ .

community ( $p = 0.011$ ), activation of the use of professional experience and achievements ( $p = 0.008$ ). Relative to other indicators, no statistically significant differences were revealed, but according to the sum of changes, the general level of professional self-fulfillment of specialists increased significantly ( $p = 0.005$ ). In some cases, individual indicators of professional self-affirmation at the end of the program worsened, for example, four people had a decrease in self-esteem of the level of achievement of their professional goals. These results can be viewed as temporary, due to the awareness of the existing career limitations. Such awareness usually stimulates a person to actively seek alternative ways of self-fulfillment. At the next survey, two months later, these indicators improved again and became higher than they were before the start of the program. Earlier the study mentioned the existence of opposing thoughts regarding the role of the feeling of satisfaction in personal and professional growth. The results of this study confirm the statement that dissatisfaction with one's achievements acts as a driving force for personal self-development and corresponding career growth.

The increase in the average group indicator according to the questionnaire during the implementation of the program occurred primarily due to the correction of low assessments of professional self-fulfillment. Two months later, after the end of the formative influence, the results of one-third of the participants corresponded to a high level, the rest came close to it. Consequently, the effect of the program is manifested in full not immediately after completion, but when a person begins to independently implement the acquired competences in professional life. During this period, the activity of setting new professional goals is somewhat reduced, but the need for professional improvement significantly increases, the project for the development of one's career becomes clearly formulated, the harmony of the life and professional space improves; considerable growth is observed in indicators of self-assessment of the level of achievement of the set professional goals, recognition of the achievements of a specialist, the use of experience and achievements, the degree of disclosure of personal potential, and the level of creativity in professional activity.

It is important to note that professional advancement has a positive effect on the general psychological well-being of the program participants, as well as on some of its aspects (Table 10). Immediately after the training, a tendency was observed to increase confidence in the ability to manage the environment, effectively use various life circumstances, choose and create conditions that satisfy the needs and correspond to values ( $p = 0.07$ , which is slightly below the level of statistical significance accepted in psychology). Comparative analysis indicates a significant increase in the indicator on the scale "Goals in life" ( $p = 0.04$ ). Thus, as a result of the implementation of the program, its participants develop strong beliefs that determine the sense of meaningfulness in life, give meaning to the present. According to the set of parameters, the overall level of psychological well-being as a result of the formative and correctional impact significantly increases ( $p = 0.033$ ).

The results obtained allow to clarify the conclusions made regarding the characteristics of the psychological well-being of professionally mobile persons. When comparing individuals with different levels of professional mobility, it was on the "Environmental management" and "Goals in life" scales that no statistically significant differences were found between the groups. The results of the experimental influence show that these parameters are associated with the level of professional self-fulfillment and do not depend on the way in which a person implements their career aspirations – through loyalty to one organization or change of jobs. Two months after the end of the program, the participants showed a significant increase in

**TABLE 10** Diagnostic results on the scale of psychological well-being in the experimental group ( $N = 10$ ,  $M \pm SD$ )

	I testing before the start	II testing immediately after the study	III testing 9–10 weeks after the study
Positive relationships with others	55.16 ± 7.17	57.82 ± 6.92	56.97 ± 7.66
Autonomy	55.27 ± 8.11	55.68 ± 8.22	61.42 ± 7.50*
Environment management	57.24 ± 8.75	60.43 ± 7.84	64.37 ± 7.36*
Personal growth	62.63 ± 10.05	65.56 ± 9.87	66.86 ± 10.17
Goals in life	59.67 ± 8.64	66.87 ± 7.79*	67.27 ± 8.86*
Self-acceptance	52.12 ± 8.17	54.83 ± 8.09	58.43 ± 7.99*
General psychological well-being index	341.81 ± 40.41	360.94 ± 39.72*	373.12 ± 37.24**

Note: statistically significant parameter shift in comparison with the first measurement.

\* $p \leq 0.05$ .

\*\* $p \leq 0.01$ .

the parameters "Autonomy," "Environmental management," and "Self-acceptance" (in all cases,  $p \leq 0.05$ ). The positive effect in relation to the increase in the scores on the "Goals in life" scale was fixed and preserved. The consistent implementation of a career development program contributes to the meaningfulness of life, the development of a positive attitude towards oneself (acceptance of oneself and one's past), personal independence (the ability to withstand social pressure in thoughts and actions, the ability to regulate personal behavior and evaluate oneself based on personal standards), develops a sense of confidence and competence in managing day-to-day affairs. The results of the control group are as follows (Table 11).

Table 11 demonstrates that there are no expressed changes in parameters in the control group. Individual cases of an increase in the indices of professional self-fulfillment did not lead to statistically significant trends. Due to the general socioeconomic and political crisis in the country, the psychological well-being of the respondents decreased slightly.

**TABLE 11** Diagnostic results of professional self-fulfillment in the control group ( $N = 10$ ,  $M \pm SD$ )

Diagnostic parameters	I testing (without further influence)	II testing in 10–12 weeks
Professional self-fulfillment questionnaire		
The need for professional development	7.64 ± 2.07	7.54 ± 1.87
Availability of a project of professional development	5.86 ± 3.21	6.06 ± 3.37
Prevailing satisfaction with professional achievements	7.02 ± 2.97	6.74 ± 3.13
Constantly setting new professional goals	7.32 ± 2.34	7.57 ± 2.25
Development of individual life and professional space	8.07 ± 1.55	7.74 ± 1.79
Achievement of the set professional goals	7.93 ± 1.37	8.25 ± 1.73
Recognition of the achievements of a specialist by the professional community	7.69 ± 2.14	7.74 ± 2.28
Use of professional experience and achievements by other specialists	6.97 ± 3.41	7.16 ± 3.32
Fulfillment of personal potential and abilities in the profession	8.17 ± 1.48	8.09 ± 1.57
Manifestation of a high level of creativity in professional activities	7.72 ± 1.57	7.92 ± 1.95
The general level of professional self-fulfillment of a specialist	73.97 ± 14.21	74.37 ± 13.95
Psychological well-being scale		
Positive relationships with others	53.95 ± 5.86	54.37 ± 6.28
Autonomy	56.47 ± 7.52	55.82 ± 7.76
Environment management	58.44 ± 6.67	55.67 ± 7.51
Personal growth	58.61 ± 11.25	60.19 ± 10.72
Goals in life	61.18 ± 7.84	61.34 ± 8.07
Self-acceptance	53.92 ± 11.13	53.74 ± 10.57
General psychological well-being index	342.17 ± 39.81	340.26 ± 40.21

## 4 | CONCLUSION

As a result of completing the program, the participants developed career competence and overcame many professional development issues. They realized their capabilities and limitations, built appropriate career strategies. They became capable of persistently and consistently implementing these career plans and programs. They are psychologically ready to face and overcome difficulties. As a result of the implementation of the program proposed in this study, its participants became capable of independently modeling and regulating professional life in a wide scope of development vectors, effectively use the existing external conditions and resources.

There is reason to believe that these effects are of a complex nature and are the result of the psychological practices carried out, the therapeutic effect of the group and individual meetings-consultations with a psychologist-coach. The program involves not only the professional sphere—practical exercises related to self-awareness, harmonization of motives, needs and goals, the development of positive life prospects, the goals of correcting early family influences, etc. Apart from solving professional problems, the presented program leads to a significant improvement in general psychological well-being—this effect took place in 100% of participants. In turn, psychological well-being provides an internal resource for further professional self-fulfillment and personal self-fulfillment in a balanced combination of various life spheres.

### PEER REVIEW

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