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Student Personality Adaptations, part I*

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Abstract

The consecutive three articles present examples of student personality adaptations. Referring to the concept of transactional analysis and knowledge in the field of personality disorders, a number of typical traits and behaviours, dominant needs and selected TA parameters are presented, as well as practical guidelines that can help teachers and educators understand their relationships with students causing problems resulting from character problems. The articles also indicate methods of compensatory actions and interventions in the form of affirmations aimed at preventing the manifestations of dysfunctional personality development.

Keywords: student, personality adaptations, schizoidality, paranoia, orality.

The article consists of three parts, which are a presentation of particular dysfunctional personality adaptations that can be observed in some students. These students often cause various problems and difficulties for teachers and educators, and the pedagogues are not always aware of the difficulties and their causes. They are sometimes referred to as difficult students, i.e. those who, in their behaviour, deliberately and intentionally, or not fully consciously, try to boycott or otherwise invalidate or hinder the educational and didactic efforts of the teacher and the school (Jagiela, 2005, pp. 13–14). Such difficulties also arise in relationships with peers and other people from the student's environment.

* The article is a translation of a fragment of one chapter in the book; J. Jagieła (2023). *Psychopedagogika relacji. Analiza transakcyjna dla nauczycieli i wychowawców*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Difin.

Some of this group of students manifest various types of personality deficits. Teachers usually notice this in a colloquial way as differences in some respects from others, the child's strange behavior that does not fit in with the rest of the class, or a kind of "excess or deficiency" of certain personality traits. Another sensitive indicator can be the teacher's own feelings, as they notice that their attention, thoughts, emotions, and ways of acting are different towards this student than towards the others. It manifests itself either in a desire for too much help and care for them, more than for other children, or, on the contrary, it causes anxiety in the teacher and a tendency to distance themselves or avoid contact.

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to deepen this kind of common-sense approach both on the basis of everything that derives from the concept of personality adaptation present in transactional analysis, and also, to some extent, from psychological knowledge about personality disorders as difficulties that always appear during childhood or adolescence and persist into adulthood (Talarowska, Moczulski, Strzelecki, 2021, p. 30).

The problem of personality adaptations themselves was initiated by a number of publications (Ware, 1983; Stewart, Joines, 2002; Joines 2011 et al.) and found a new form of inquiry in a project called PCM – *Process Communication Model* (Kahler, 2008). On her website "Transactional analysis for enthusiasts and practitioners",¹ Agnieszka Woś-Szymanowska presents an in-depth analysis of individual approaches to personality adaptation. The concept in question is dynamic, which means that it is constantly being supplemented and clarified. This paper presents the author's own solution and understanding of this type of issue. First of all, the number of adaptations was extended, some TA parameters were assigned to them and this was illustrated on a structural model. What is more, the basic unmet need accompanying personality adaptations was indicated. It has been recognized that particular personality adaptations correspond to specific states of the harmed inner child, so that the teacher or educator is able to look at a given student also from the perspective of their specific childhood suffering they sometimes experience. In the search to illustrate individual adaptations, examples from literature, film and fairy tales were used. Perhaps the attentive reader will be inclined to supplement the list with other patterns? I strongly encourage you to do so. At the end, an attempt was made to list both the affirmations that "healed" the student and the practical measures to be taken while interacting with the student or their parents. The order in which the individual adaptations are presented is not accidental, but refers to the concept of developmental psychoanalysis (Johnson 1998).

¹ <http://www.analiza-transakcyjna.pl/2017/01/23/adaptacje-osobowosci-przeglad-informacji/> (accessed: 21.04.218).

With regard to each personality adaptation, the personality traits and possible deviations from the behavioural norm are indicated. Clearly, this is not a complete collection. They are, at most, some of the most typical manifestations of a given adaptation. None of the individual qualities or typical behaviours is a proof that we are unquestionably dealing with this and not another kind of forming character. Only **quantity** and **quality** of such traits and behaviours may indicate certain intensified tendencies, in other words, point to the fact that they are more or less maladaptive in nature (Cierpiałkowska, Frączek 2017, 129–144). This approach is called the dimensional-categorical approach and is present in the well-known clinical classifications ICD-11 and DSM-5 (Nowak 2015).

Let us move to a number of other comments and reservations. Identification and observation by a teacher or class tutor of certain specific features and behaviours of a pupil/student should not be of a stigmatising nature (the so-called *labelling*), signifying its deviance. This aspect was also noticed by Julie Hay who shares her doubts in one of her essays, proposing her own model (AP3) relating to the personality characteristics of individual people (2013). The graphic diagram of this solution is a three-dimensional cube with three intersecting axes. Each of the axes is a continuum, symbolizing the opposing traits of human characters.

Therefore, the study presented here does not in any way constitute the basis for a full specialist psychological diagnosis, which can rule on anything, but a pedagogical guideline stating that the development of a given pupil's personality is not proceeding in the right way. It can show that it is proceeding in a way that is not always beneficial for the student and their environment, and that it can be prevented by the teacher's or educator's conscious, intentional, reasonable and deliberate actions. That was the intention behind the presentation shown here. The lack of prudence of an educator in this field can become a source of many problems and consequences difficult to overcome. The aforesaid remark was expressed by the first readers and reviewers of this text. Hence, it is crucial to mention and record it.

These are not the only caveats that need to be made here. Another one is the observation that we do not always deal with "pure" adaptations. Often, a number of features and properties overlap to form an individual constellation and do not yield to strict rules of order. Very often we deal with the so-called mixed personality types. Kristina Brajović Car and Patrick Ellerich write about it, emphasizing at the same time that personality adaptations do not refer directly to pathology or mental health, but to the dominant motivations of drivers, parental influences, and values, beliefs, and messages that the child has recognized as their own in their development (Car, Ellerich, 2015, pp. 83–87). Any attempt at a precise classification will therefore be burdened with an inevitable feeling of imperfection and unfulfillment. In a number of cases, there is also a kind of ambivalence in relation to certain features, e.g. the desire for closeness and be-

longing, and, at the same time, on the other hand, the desire for autonomy and independence. This does not make it easier to understand some of the issues. The fact that someone is a loner, does not take enough care of their needs, likes to expose themselves excessively, or is overly disciplined, does not make them a person who is clearly mentally disturbed. Only the severity, significance and importance of certain traits move a person to a continuum: from the position of health and proper functioning towards disorders. At the same time, “There are no sharp boundaries between norms and pathology. Individual personality styles gradually transition into personality disorders” (Millon, Davis, 2005, p. 192). Therefore, certain traits that appear can sometimes be treated as a certain “mental beauty”, “style in which one functions”, or “rather strange character traits” that give someone a specific charm, determine their originality or simply distinguish some people from others. In my classes with students, I sometimes use a certain (perhaps oversimplified?) analogy about preparing dishes. A little bit of a particular spice (in this case, we are talking about some of these qualities) gives the dishes flavor and specificity. That is why we sometimes talk about the positive qualities of some adaptations. However, an excess of aromas and marinades, like the proverbial spoonful of tar in a barrel of honey, makes the dish almost impossible to eat (this is the form disorders take). Therefore, it is worth not classifying others too hastily, too quickly and without much thought, as mentally unbalanced or even ill, but being able to see their specificity and the problems they face.

1. I’m a lonely island

The first adaptation which we will devote some attention to will be the schizoid adaptation, since its emergence is associated with the earliest, often pre- or post-natal developmental period. As some authors claim, “Schizoid personality traits are visible from early childhood” (Talarowska, Moczulski, Strzelecki, 2021, p. 46). Ambivalent thinking, feelings, and behaviours that characterize this personality can be expressed in the statement, “I’m a mystery to the whole world – don’t even try to penetrate and understand me,” or “I don’t need anyone, because I can handle life on my own.”

Table 1

Unloved Child	Schizoid adaptation
The central problem	Existence.
A basic unmet need	Being accepted, safe, and welcomed by those closest to you.
Dominant feelings	Sadness and fear. Anxiety, especially in situations that require trust in others and personal involvement. Sometimes there is also despair, shame and blocked rage.

Table 1 (cont.)

Unloved Child	Schizoid adaptation
Parents' behavior towards their child	The birth of this child was not accepted or created additional problems in the family. The parents expected the child to take care of themselves and not engage their attention. They wanted and aspired that the upbringing and care of the child should be taken care of by others (e.g. grandparents, care center, etc.)
Attachment style*	Empty and ambivalent
Some prohibitions	Don't exist. Don't be important. Don't be close. Don't feel joy. Don't let your relationships with others succeed. Don't be normal and mentally healthy.
Script drivers	Stay strong.

Likely ego states



Selected features and behaviours

Isolation and distancing oneself from others. Coldness and emotional distance from the environment. Withdrawal and passivity in social interactions. Inability to interact emotionally with others. Protecting one's space and privacy. Escaping into the world of fantasy and imagination. Focusing mainly on oneself. At the moment of feeling unpleasant emotions, going back to one's own world ("snails' response"). Frequently choosing solitary or bizarre activities. Lack of interest in praise and criticism. Conflict avoidance. Aggression can be defence against an imagined attack. A limited ability to take care of oneself and soothe one's anxieties. Lack of interest in the sexual sphere. Lack of joy, desire to play and freedom. Proclaiming judgments that differ from the beliefs of the majority of those around them. Extreme views that sometimes take the form of fanaticism or mania. Forgetfulness and a kind of quarrelsomeness that gives the impression of wanting to defeat an excessively persecuting or harassing parent. A kind of "cutting off from life in the body", which manifests itself in limited movements, lack of expression and natural spontaneity, as well as fluidity and grace.

Common beliefs

"I don't need anyone," "I'm self-sufficient," "Nobody understands me", "I'm somehow a threat to my life," "I need a lot of space for myself", "I can handle everything with my intellect," "Others are boring, they impose themselves and being with them is just a waste of my time," "A relationship with someone will only limit my freedom," "I will find relief in a different, metaphysical and esoteric world," "If my mother doesn't love me, God will love me for sure," "If I stopped controlling myself, I could kill someone," "The world is in fact terrifying to me," "I'll show you – I'll take revenge on you," "There's no place for me in this world."

Table 1 (cont.)

Unloved Child	Schizoid adaptation
Position in life	I'm not OK. – You (you) are not OK.
Favourite interpersonal games	"Wooden leg", "Kick me", "Look what I did because of you". "If it weren't for you."
Some real, film, literary, and fairy-tale characters	A model example is the protagonist of the film "Leon the Professional" (1994) directed by L. Besson, brilliantly played by Jean Reno as a "cleaner" of the dirt of this world, the character of Conrad in the film "Ordinary People" (1980), directed by R. Redford, Macon Leary in "The Accidental Tourist" (1988), directed by L. Kasdan, "The Man Who Wasn't There" (2001), directed by E. Coen, J. Coen, where the protagonist is a taciturn, distant hairdresser who does not reveal his emotions, the movie "Bartleby" (2001), directed by J. Parker with a bizarre and withdrawn clerk, the viper in A. Saint-Exupéry's fairy tale "The Little Prince," who lived alone in the desert, but could be mischievous and "bite for pleasure," a beech tree from the children's story "Moomin Valley" by T. Jansson. It is a good idea to look for similar examples oneself.
Positive traits	Serenity. Reflexivity. Imagination, task-oriented nature. Very good abstract and logical thinking. Hence, "less disturbed schizoid individuals may give vent to their intellectual faculties by becoming scientists, mathematicians, or philosophers" (Millon, Davis, 2005, p. 459). Preferring professions focused on goals and things, rather than on relationships with others, e.g. IT specialist, production worker, independent designer, programmer, computer graphic designer, librarian, forester, lighthouse keeper (apparently this profession still exists?), etc. In a positive sense, this person is sometimes called: "Creative Dreamer"***
Desirable signs of recognition**	Positive, unconditional.
Teacher's affirmations	"You belong to us," "You are important and worthy of attention to us," "You have the right to your privacy and your own space," "Solitude can be just as necessary in life as being with others," "You can trust your feelings," "Physical movement can also be fun," "You can feel safe among us."

* Quoted in T. White (2019). *Attachment patterns and personality type*. <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10159561698269637&set=pcb.10159561698579637> (accessed: 29.09.2021)

** term used in the PCM (Polish Centre of Mediation)

** Pointing out the signs of recognition, I was guided partly in all the indicated cases by: A. Woś-Szymanowska, *What signs of recognition do you give and receive?* <https://analiza-transakcyjna.pl/znaki-rozpoznania/> (accessed: 02.05.2020)

Source: own materials.

Sooner or later, **teachers and educators** are likely to encounter this type of personality in students who are rejected, lonely, on the margins of class life, as well as alienated students with bizarre interests or even passions (e.g., frighten-

ing or spiritualistic fascinations). Building an optimal relationship with a student can be difficult in such situations. Such attempts were aptly summed up by saying, “You may knock, but you will find no one.” It evokes the reactions I heard from the teacher in a concise characterization of a certain student: “Boy Strange” (this statement also says a lot about the teacher’s attitude towards the student). She also added that when she spoke to him, it was as if she had to talk “with a table leg” and her words were met with complete indifference. Thus, we can see that the teacher-student relationship in such cases can be full of tension, reluctance and helplessness.

According to the interpersonal approach, how does the development of a schizoid personality occur? No one knows for sure, but clinical intuition tells us that schizoid individuals are likely to exhibit interpersonal deficits from the beginning of their life. (Millon, Davis, 2005, p. 442).

Moreover, the converge of the concepts “schizoidity” and “schizophrenia” also raises concerns, fears and is not accidental. However, as the aforementioned authors write, “Not all schizoid people develop symptoms of schizophrenia and its onset is not always preceded by a personality disorder” (Millon, Davis, 2005, p. 453).

Therefore, it is worth taking a skilful, individual and less clinical look at a student who exhibits some schizoid traits, as if they were a harmed, unhappy child, hurt in a specific way. These are children with the so-called “Badly Licked Bear Syndrome”. Anne Ancelin Schützenberger uses this term to refer to people who are clumsy, bizarre, and socially maladjusted. She writes,

Mammals lick their young as soon as they are born, thus marking them as their own. This process can be disrupted, and then the young dies or is socially or emotionally handicapped. In colloquial French, people who are clumsy or inept in life are called “badly licked bears” (Schützenberger, 2017, p. 16).

I will not elaborate on this topic, but I will only mention the fact that the context in which the child was conceived and born is of great importance for its further functioning. How it will be welcomed, even if only by symbolic prophecies spoken “over the cradle”. This process, as many authors point out quite unanimously, takes place in the earliest development period, i.e. between the moment of birth (or maybe even earlier?) and the eighteenth month of life. Everyone builds oneself on the basis of experiencing a basic sense of security and early attachment. When it is missing, such a person carries their hurt Unloved Child into adulthood.

Do unwanted and unloved children grow up in families? Is that not exaggerated and overly dramatic? After all, children are usually expected and even desired. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Let us quote the narrative of an adult woman who participated in the research on the sense of childhood injustice,

[...] My first experience of injustice, of unfair treatment, was in my early childhood. I'm a child rejected by my mother and I've never really been accepted by her. On her part, I experienced a number of unfair acts such as humiliation, threats, constant depreciation of my person, and unfair treatment in the relationship with my siblings [...] (Szyszka, 2020).

Thus, such events do take place and undoubtedly result in certain effects. A recent, widely commented study conducted at the Centre for Research on Personality Development at SWPS University indicates that 13% of women and men regret their parenthood. These are mostly people who have had a difficult childhood themselves (Łygas, 2021). They perceive parenthood mainly as their torment, an obstacle in their professional career, or being overwhelmed by responsibilities.

Almost every teacher, after a long period of professional work, will admit that at least once they have come across this type of case of a student showing schizoid traits. However, the developed form of pathology in the form of schizoid personality disorder occurs relatively less frequently compared to other adaptation problems. Many sources indicate that the number of people who can be given a similar clinical diagnosis ranges from 0.5 to 7% of the general population, this type of personality is more common in men than in women, as well as in people whose family members suffer from schizophrenia (Talarowska, Moczulski, Strzelecki, 2021, p. 46). Individual and few schizoid traits, however, manifest themselves more frequently.

Guidelines for teachers and educators

So how can an educator build their relationship with a student with schizoid traits? Let's list a few such tips. Therefore, it is worth:

- Develop patience!
- Systematically increase the student's involvement in the life of a small group or community (e.g. scout troop, interest club, sports club, etc.).
- Restore the ability to adapt to the environment and its modifications (e.g. involve the student in the preparation of important school events, classroom décor, organisation of an excursion or a trip, etc.).
- Arrange situations conducive to mastering various skills that are important in social relationships (e.g. listening to others, assertiveness, conflict resolution, expressing one's feelings or opinions, etc.).
- To show the connections between thinking and the emotional sphere and to deepen the emotional contact with reality ("When this happened, what could the protagonist of this story have felt?").
- Encourage, but not force (!) to express one's emotions in a safe environment ("Write down on separate pieces of paper the feelings it evokes in you").

- Awaken the desire to take care of oneself and self-soothing (“What brings you relief and pleasure?”).
- Avoid comparisons with other children (“Each of you in class is different and I accept that”).
- Take an interest in the child and their life in a non-possessive way. However, it is worth remembering not to insist on closeness, as it may be too difficult for this type of student and cause anxiety (e.g. an accidental question in the school corridor, “How are you doing?”, “How is your new laptop doing?”, etc.).
- Sometimes you can share your own feelings, hesitations, or mistakes (“Sometimes it doesn’t work out for me either, and then I worry”).
- Inspire the student to undertake various types of physical activity and sports, in order to increase the integration of natural life processes. (“Which sport do you do or would you like to do?”).
- Remember the student’s name, use it often, and even sometimes use diminutives (“Mickey”), and remember and notice their presence (“Michael is in class today, so maybe he can tell us something about it?”).
- Be aware that a student with schizoid adaptation requires special understanding and care for building a constructive relationship with them (e.g. the teacher will often experience feelings in the form of psychological projection that they are accused of dryness and mistreatment).
- Increase the participation of parents in contacts with teachers and educators.

Let us take as an example of necessary attentiveness towards the students we are talking about here an awkward situation in which a teacher, wanting to include a marginalized and isolated student in the classroom community, will offer them, for example, to present their interests in front of the whole class. Doing so seems rational, but it can have an opposite effect. The bizarreness of one’s passion, their awe-inspiring, or even macabre fascinations can arouse terror or fear in the rest of the class, which in turn can cause even greater rejection. One of my schizoid patients (a high school student) admitted to me that he watched horror movies for hours every day, which is his only hobby that he devoted most of his time to, as well as sculpting microscopic figurines. The fantasies and dreams he often indulged in were the desire to come to class one day with a machine gun and shoot all his classmates, including the teacher. As is well known, such acts of terror, as reported in the press, sometimes take place in the United States and in other countries². The perpetrators of such acts were usually

² One of many such reports. Eighteen-year-old student from Chesterfield, South Carolina (USA), wanted to blow up his school (year 2008). Other reports describe a former nursing student One Goh who was accused of murdering seven people and attempted murder of three more at one of the colleges in Oakland, California (2012). A 20-year-old man shot and killed 28 people, in-

later characterized as calm, extremely gentle, not causing any major educational problems. but isolating themselves from the life of the class. Stephen M. Johnson writes,

They imagine that they can suddenly begin to destroy everything and everyone within their reach. Such sudden explosions, for example, cause a previously quiet and peaceful boy to suddenly start killing innocent people in the street from the roof of a house; these are situations in which occasional fantasies are realized (Johnson, 1993, p. 50).

2. I don't trust anyone

Lack of the feelings of security and acceptance, as well as developmental deficits at the earliest stage of life (0-18 months) lead us to an adaptation similar to that of a schizoid person, which is a paranoid personality. And as you can read, "Paranoid personality traits often co-occur with schizoid personality traits" (Talarowska, Moczulski, Strzelecki, 2021, p. 40). John Bradshaw, characterizing the reasons for the emergence of this type of adaptation, states, "If caregivers are untrustworthy, children develop a deep feeling of distrust. The world seems to them to be a dangerous, hostile and unpredictable place" (Bradshaw, 2008, p. 36). He continues, "The first developmental task in life is to develop a sense of trust. We need to learn that someone else (mom, dad, the world) is safe and trustworthy. A fundamental sense of trust has an impact on our entire lives. If we can trust the world, we can also learn to trust ourselves. This means that you can trust your strength, your perception and interpretation of the world, your feelings and desires" (Bradshaw, 2008, p. 37). The consequence of distrust is ambivalence that is attributed to various historical dictators or tyrants, and which can be travesty with the statement: "Trust can sometimes be good – but vigilance and control are better."

Table 2

Distrustful Child	Paranoid adaptation
The central problem	Trust
A basic unmet need	Safe trust in the environment.
Dominant feelings	Suspicion and distrust of others. Anger and fear. Restlessness in confrontational situations. Irritability and shame. Fear of rejection.

cluding 20 children at primary school in Sandy Hook, not too far from New York City (2012). However, this typical and repetitive psychological characterization of perpetrators is really interesting and symptomatic. "He had no friends, no colleagues, he was a shy loner, even in high school being a good student, he didn't keep in touch with anyone. In the class memorial book, there is not even his photo." – wrote the press (Jagięła, 2013).

Table 2 (cont.)

Distrustful Child	Paranoid adaptation
Parents' behaviour towards their child	The parents did not provide the child with a sense of security. The child was subjected to strict requirements, but also to their ambivalent and sometimes inconsistent behaviour. Not providing enough parental support. Limiting the child's natural spontaneity. Burdening the child with traits it doesn't have.
Attachment style*	Ambivalent
Some prohibitions	Don't trust. Don't be a child. Don't feel joy. Don't be close.
Script drivers	Be perfect. Stay strong.

Likely ego states



Selected features and behaviours

Suspicion and timidity in all sorts of safe situations. Caution and distrust when dealing with others. Vigilance and anxiety in new circumstances. Doubts about fidelity and loyalty. Looking for hidden meanings in ordinary events. Excessive sensitivity to disrespect or criticism. Rigid and persistent opinions. Interest in mysterious, unexplained events or conspiracies. Expressing derision or contempt when a child is confronted with views that differ from its own. Experiencing setbacks, failures, or unpleasantness in an exaggerated way and for too long. Desire for self-sufficiency. Excessive desire to control the environment. Preference for friendship with one person or two other children. Reluctance to confide in anyone for fear that this information will be used against the child. Slighting and ignoring colleagues in the belief that they have ill will or hidden agendas. Small life goals and ambitions, desires and plans for the future. Cynicism demonstrated many times. Belief in one's superiority over the environment. Intransigence in the case of self-adopted preferences. An exaggerated desire to excuse oneself and justify one's actions. Frequent comparison with others and the desire to compete. Frequently manifested jealousy. Aversion to surprises and different situations. Predicting negative or catastrophic events. Frequent inquiring expectation of others to express their own opinions, judgments, or beliefs. Strong identification with the area of faith and professed values. Inability to forgive real or imagined wrongs. Pessimism and stubbornness. No sense of humour.

Table 2 (cont.)

Distrustful Child	Paranoid adaptation
Common beliefs	"It pays off to be very careful and attentive." "Other people can be dangerous." "If I'm not careful, I'll be used or manipulated." "Someone who is friendly or cordial toward me probably has ulterior motives or wants to use me." "I will not allow myself to be humiliated by anyone." "I will try to eliminate all ambiguity from my life." "Attack is the best defence"
Position in life	I'm OK. – You (you) are not OK. (I+, You–)
Favourite interpersonal games	"I've got you here, you..." A flaw: "Kick me."
Some real, film, literary, and fairy-tale characters	The protagonists of the film "Paranoïds" (2008) directed by G. Medina (Argentina). "Fear to Be Afraid" (2012) directed by C. Milles (Great Britain). "Lament paranoïka" (2014), a Polish short film directed by D. Kocurek. Joseph McCarthy (1908–1957), Senate Committee Chairman in the USA, who is more or less justifiably attributed with paranoid traits, and John Edgar Hoover, who in the years 1924-1972, as the director of the FBI, created an extensive and effective investigative system, at the same time committing a number of abuses and persecutions. Rabbit from the short story "Winnie the Pooh" by A.A. Milne.** It is worth looking for similar examples independently.
Positive traits	Mindfulness and prudence. Diligence and determination in pursuit of goals. Aiming to know how things are in reality, not how they seem. Paying close attention to the loyalty of others. Criticism. Lack of naivety in uncertain or unclear situations. Ability to defend oneself against manipulation. Willingness to make sacrifices. The above-mentioned features will encourage the choice of certain professions, e.g. a policeman, a controller, a prison service officer, or special and spy services, etc. They can achieve success at work that requires independence and dealing with dry facts, e.g. in various types of production or legal fields. "To some extent, paranoid thinking is undeniably healthy" (Millon & Davis 2005, p. 507). In a positive sense, it is sometimes referred to as: "A Brilliant Skeptic"****
Desirable signs of recognition	Positive conditional.
Teacher's affirmations	"I think you believe what you said – but try to check it." "Even if I don't agree with you, I listen carefully to everything you say." "You are entitled to your opinion." "Your skepticism allows us all not to make mistakes." "Sometimes it's good to think about a different point of view – maybe others are right sometimes?" "Trust is a priceless gift, although I agree with you that it cannot be given to any random person."

* Quoted in T. White (2019). *Attachment patterns and personality type*. <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10159561698269637&set=pcb.10159561698579637> (accessed: 29.09.2021)

** Interesting analyses of the transactional ego states and the behavior of the characters contained in the fairy tale on Winnie the Pooh is provided by an article by Jennifer R. Adams (Adams, 2009).

*** Term used in the PCM (Polish Centre of Mediation)

Teachers and educators will sometimes perceive a pupil or their charge with paranoid traits as one who is overly cautious and shows a lack of trust in a number of situations of school life. However, it is difficult to talk about trust in a general way, so when we talk about trust, we must always specify who and what it refers to – as Piotr Sztompka states (2007). Trust is therefore relative. For example, we trust someone only in certain matters, and in others it does not have to mean much to us. However, in the case of paranoid people, they seem to have an overgeneralised distrust of many areas, people, and events. As has already been said, schizoid and paranoid adaptation have a lot in common. They stem from a similar background of lack of security in the earliest period of one's life. It is no coincidence that Erik H. Erikson, talking about eight periods of human life, described the first stage as a dichotomy between trust and distrust (Erikson, 2000, pp. 257–261).

Only a teacher who gains a certain level of trust with the student who exhibits the above-mentioned qualities and their parents has a chance to build a constructive relationship with them and to have a positive educational impact. However, it is also worth being aware that, as some claim, “this battle cannot be won”. One probably cannot win completely, but that does not mean one should not try.

Guidelines for teachers and educators

Although building trust with students, and especially their parents, who exhibit paranoid traits and behaviours is difficult, it is worth remembering (to):

- maintain a certain balance between giving attention, support, or interest to, for example, parents, and expressing one's own, often different views or positions. (“I hear that you have a crystallized view of upbringing. It's good to know how to proceed. I see it in a slightly different way. So let's stick to our own beliefs.”)
- avoid ambiguous statements (“You didn't quite do it right”) and be specific and patient (“But let's be specific, what's going on?”).
- rely heavily on your sense of observation (“I see you're making good progress.”)
- keep this balance, which is difficult and requires certain skills, throughout the relationship, as it is indispensable for the survival of the relationship.
- not to get provoked by a student (“I see that you are asking me this question not by accident”).
- look for a situation in which the student will be objectively confronted with other positions, views or attitudes towards reality (“I have brought you one of my books from my home library, promise to read it and tell me what you think of it.”).

- organize activities that teach cooperation, not just competition between students (“Let’s try to do this together.”)
- teach self-distance (“I’ll tell you a story about what a stupid thing happened to me yesterday”).
- take some time during a class to laugh and joke (“Who’s going to tell a joke or make us laugh today?”). David Shapiro writes, “Paranoids rarely laugh. They may act as if they were laughing, but it is not real laughter; that means they do not feel like laughing at all.” (Shapiro, 1965).
- to see the difference between words and deeds. Between facts and opinions (My motto is the words of Marcus Aurelius, “Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a point of view, not the truth.”).
- teach fact-checking (“I’m hearing disturbing things here, so I’ll have to look it up somewhere”).
- not to be “hypnotized” by your parents’ strange-content stories, because this group of people tends to be the most determined “hypnotists”. A signal may be that they will consistently discourage you from seeking information about the facts. At the same time, the teacher must take into account the fact that some of the stories they tell may be true³.
- be aware of the sad realization that this kind of adaptation is always doomed in some sense (according to Leonardo da Vinci’s maxim, “Experience has proven that he who never trusts will be deceived”).

In a vast majority of cases, if teachers encounter paranoid traits of students or their parents in one way or another, they will be mild forms of this kind of adaptation. Psychiatrists and psychotherapists, however, more often face more serious forms of paranoid disorder, where the motto is: "Trust no one!" They also know how difficult this therapy is. In the beginning, when patients experience a lot of attention, support and understanding from the therapist, they are delighted and are happy to come to every session. However, when the therapy process progresses and some therapeutic interventions appear, for example, interpretations or confrontations of the patient’s world with reality, then the atmosphere of the meetings changes for the worse. One can see how the patient’s body manifests distance from the therapist and even physical stiffening. As a consequence, one day the patient no longer comes to the next session and remains convinced, for example, that “the therapist was in collusion with them (or e.g. with her) behind their back”! I mention this to make it easier to understand why the aforementioned “balance” seems so relevant in relations with this type of adaptation. Thus, we read:

³ I know the accounts of psychologists working in a mental health clinic in a large provincial city during and after martial law, who said that some patients talked about f situations from their life in such a way that it seemed like the product of their paranoid delusions. They said they felt persecuted, watched and bugged. Unfortunately, later on some of these facts turned out true.

Perhaps more than for any other personality disorder, the therapist of the paranoid needs to be sensitive to many pitfalls that may arise. There is no doubt that the most dangerous trap is the direct confrontation of semi-delusional beliefs (Millon, Davis, 2005, p. 547).

Let us also add that severe paranoid disorders affect between 0.5 and 2.5% of cases in the general population.

And finally, an invitation to reflection expressed in the question: “Doesn’t the atmosphere of school life sometimes show paranoid traits?” The question seems absurd on the surface. Indeed, it is easy to notice that institutions and organizations (created by man) sometimes exhibit traits of personality adaptations usually attributed to people. Isn’t bureaucracy itself, expressed by the onerous necessity to confirm everything with a signature, with its excess of orders and circulars, documenting often the most trivial decisions, placing annotations on the smallest or insignificant documents, etc., an emanation of paranoid thinking? I think it is worth considering.

3. I don’t need anything

The last adaptation in this part of the article will be oral personality, which shares with the previous two a very early moment of formation of this type of psychological problems (0–18 months). During this period, the child may have been wanted and felt accepted, and thus attachment and original trust were formed, but it was neglected (sometimes for objective reasons) in terms of its basic needs. Thus, the difference between schizoidity and orality is expressed in a slightly different nature of causes.

Schizoid adaptation usually stems from chronically inadequate and cold care during this period and/or from painful mistreatment, generally by the child’s primary caregiver. The oral pattern occurs more frequently as a result of a chronic lack of compliance of the caring environment. Parents may be unavailable here because of depression, drug addiction, overwork, or simple parental ineptitude (Johnson, 1993b, p. 24).

The effects of this distinction can be seen in a number of dimensions. They can also be seen in the ambivalence that sometimes manifests itself and says, “I’m here to meet all your needs – but in fact they are mine.”

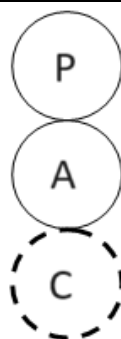
Table 3

Neglected Child	Oral adaptation*
The central problem	Needs.
A basic unmet need	Being satisfied in one’s desires.
Dominant feelings	Yearning. Grief. Fear of abandonment or loss. Loneliness. Despair, but also periodic euphoric joy (“Mom came back and brought something”). Fear of abandonment.

Table 3 (cont.)

Neglected Child	Oral adaptation*
Parents' behaviour towards their child	Expectations that the child does not need anything and does not engage its parents as well as does not develop or grow up too fast.
Attachment style	Insecure and ambivalent
Some prohibitions	Don't need anything. Don't be important. Don't feel grief and anger. Don't grow up.
Script drivers	Give pleasure to others.

Probable ego states



Selected features and behaviours

Neglecting oneself and one's needs, at the same time craving full and unreciprocated fulfillment. Not taking care of one's own interests, to which one has no right. In a literal sense, not just figurative one, it is a child: "unfed" (because it is hungry), "unsatisfied" (because it is not cuddled) or "not taken care of" (because it is not changed). A desire to receive loving care and support, but also a great readiness to selflessly help others. Excessive concern for others and their well-being. Demanding protection and special treatment. Growing up too early and taking on serious duties and responsibilities. Caring for and minding animals. Frequent complaining about one's fate. Reduced aggressiveness. Taking on excessive responsibility (e.g., for one's siblings) or ostentatiously rejecting it. Being overprotective towards one's own children. Ambivalent excitement combined with depression and mood swings. A tendency to undereat or, on the contrary, overeating. Tendencies to develop serious diseases (often related to the digestive system) and the occurrence of manic-depressive disorders. A tendency to use various types of stimulants: alcohol, caffeine, nicotine or drugs.

Common beliefs

"I don't need anything." "I don't need anything to live" "If I don't need anything, I won't feel frustration and pain." "I'll manage on my own." "I'm able to accomplish everything on my own." "I can meaning in my life in sacrifice and devotion to others, in boundless giving and unconditional love." "My needs and desires are so great that if I were to reveal them, others would certainly reject me." "My desires are far greater than other people's."

Position in life

I'm not OK. – You are OK. (I-, You+)

Favourite interpersonal games

"Gratitude." "I just wanted to help", "Look how hard I try", "Do something to me", "Maybe you will try..., yes, but...".

Table 3 (cont.)

Neglected Child	Oral adaptation*
Some real, film, literary, and fairy-tale characters	<p>“City Lights” (1931), one of the films by Ch. Chaplin. “The Bicycle Thief” (1948) – a neorealist masterpiece by V. De Sica. “Bridget Jones’s Diary” (2001) is a British film based on the novel by H. Fielding. “Love” (2013), a film directed by H. Michael. Other similar threads in many movies. Countless saints of the Catholic and Orthodox churches giving their lives for others (e.g. Father Maximilian Kolbe). “The Little Prince” (1943) from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s philosophical novel. The main protagonist sacrificed himself to make Rose happy (he watered her, covered her with a cloche, shielded her, killed caterpillars for her safety, listened when she boasted and was there when she was silent). “Zosia Samosia” from Julian Tuwim’s poem. Winnie the Pooh, who often soothed his sorrows with a barrel of honey. It is worth looking for similar examples on one’s own.</p>
Positive traits	<p>Readiness to selflessly sacrifice oneself for others. Generosity, docility and engagement in the lives of people under one’s care. The capacity for compassion. High emotional sensitivity. Ability to show warmth and care. A tendency to choose professions that support and “feed” others in a symbolic, but also literal or figurative sense (e.g. cook, nurse, clergyman, social worker, educator in a care center, teacher, doctor, psychologist, etc.). Such a person can be described as: “The Docile Samaritan.”</p>
Desirable signs of recognition	<p>Positive, unconditional.</p>
Teacher’s affirmations	<p>“It’s good to take care of others, but also to take care of oneself and one’s health.” “Life is about exchange: you give something to others, and others give something to you too.” “When a person sacrifices themselves excessively for others, they may stop liking them after a while.” “When you need help, it’s good to know who you can and should turn to.” “It’s normal to have your own needs and desires as well.” “You have the right to take care of yourself.”</p>

* does not appear in ICD-11 and DSM-5 clinical classifications

Source: own materials.

Teachers and educators will certainly come across the situation of a neglected child many times. Numerous authors are also increasingly recognizing this problem in the field of their research interests.

The problem of child neglect is on the rise all over the world today. A child who should always be cared for and receive care from its family and society, more and more often experiences rejection, and often even drastic forms of violence,

writes Zenon Jasiński in the introduction to the book “Neglecting the child. Selected phenomena” (Górnicka, 2017, p. 7). Similarly, Józefa Brągiel, concluding her reflections, states

... that neglect is a form of child abuse that keeps occurring. Due to very serious effects, especially seen in the development of a young child, it is necessary to diagnose and intervene quickly in order to protect the child from the effects of neglect. (Górnicka, 2017, p. 34).

On the other hand, Wiesław Sikorski sees the reasons for the child's neglect in a faulty way of communicating in the family.

A child who cannot speak directly about what it thinks, feels and expects is often faced with the necessity of hiding its real experiences. In everyday contacts, this involves removing them from speech or replacing them with other content. Usually, a sign of such discomfort is creating inconsistent messages. On the contrary, it also happens that it is the parents who commit similar communicative distortions in relationships with their children. In the latter case, improper communication can be a source or a factor intensifying child neglect. (Górnicka, 2017, p. 47).

In the case of infants, a child who is repeatedly abandoned (e.g., as a consequence of the mother's illness, losses and objective life situations, etc.) or disappointed (e.g., by lack of care and support) will do everything to adapt to this abandonment and disappointment. There are numerous forms and manifestations of failure to meet children's basic needs. They leave resentment and a sense of hurt and injustice in the minds of adults. Neglected children are often forced to take on responsibilities beyond their measure and take care of others. Many years after this experience, one of the adult women participating in the research said,

[...] My childhood ended at the age of ten, when the responsibilities of taking care of my younger brothers fell on me, which was doubly difficult because of my mother's constant threats that I should watch them so that nothing bad happened to them. I wonder why my mom had so much hostility towards me, I have a daughter myself and I can't imagine treating my own child like that [...] (Szyszka, 2020).

Another, much younger woman, said,

My mother has been drinking for as long as I can remember, she didn't care about us, she was violent. If we weren't sitting in the corners of the house or in the bathroom, we were staying in an orphanage."

And she adds further on,

[...] From that time I remember poverty, constant fights, fear, but the worst thing was when my mother didn't have enough money for alcohol, then she was unbearable, you had to hide in corners because she was so aggressive. I often walked around dirty and unkempt, and I remember that there was a shortage of food. I couldn't stand her drunkenness [...] (Szyszka, 2020).

This type of personality adaptation that is not recognized in current clinical classifications is characterized by psychoanalysts as follows:

In general, then, the oral character develops when the longing for the mother is repressed even before the oral needs are satisfied. Then an unconscious conflict arises:

on the one hand, there is the need, and on the other, the fear of the repetition of the acute disappointment. (Johnson, 1993a, p. 123).

An oral person willing to sacrifice for others can be metaphorically defined as one who “willingly feeds others, but does not always remember about their meal.”

Guidelines for teachers and educators.

Children experiencing these kinds of difficult experiences and deprivation of their own needs require special care and attention from teachers and educators. While in the case of schizoid adaptation children and adolescents expect the teacher mainly to be available and present, in the case of oral adaptation they need attention and sympathy, and sometimes also factual and very specific help. Therefore, in the first place, teachers should:

- pay attention to all forms of student neglect and respond appropriately to them.

At the same time, keep in mind that in a psychological sense no one can satisfy all the needs in the case of this type of personality adaptation.

- develop ways of working closely with social welfare centres, school counsellors and counselling and guidance centres; (it is good to have an up-to-date list of possible contacts with such people, facilities and institutions).
- not allow themselves to be invited and participate in one of the most destructive games of oral people, which is the extortion of constant help and interest (“I think that you should turn to someone more competent with this matter of your daughter”).
- not give in to the student’s idealizations that they are the only persons who can satisfy their needs. (“I’m happy to support you, but I’m not the only one you can turn to for help.”)
- encourage their students to express their own needs, dreams and plans (“Write what you would like to achieve in the near future”).
- talk sometimes about their own sorrows and joys (“Our worried neighbors’ cat went missing recently, but everyone was happy when he came back cold and hungry”).
- point to the child’s objects of greatest attachment (“Let everyone say now who they love, or like the most, and why”).
- teach flexibility (“What is always worth doing and what is not worth doing”).
- give the right to experience different, not always accepted feelings (e.g. fear, sadness, anger, disappointment, etc.).
- show the possibilities of assertive behaviours (“When do you think you can or should say no to someone?”).

- show ways to deal with rejection (“What do you think you can do when someone doesn’t like you or doesn’t want to play with you?”).
- revise the ways of asking for help in difficult situations (“Who can we turn to for advice when we feel bad or don’t know what to do?”).
- teach perseverance (“What to do when we don’t want to do something anymore?”).
- set boundaries in meeting their own needs (“You know, I think that as humans we don’t get everything we want in life, but quite often our fate gives us more than we might sometimes expect.”)
- promote a strategy of taking on challenges to the best of their students’ ability.
- increase tolerance to feelings of longing (“When we miss someone very much, what should we do then?... Let each one tell us about their own ways.”).
- learn to face their unfulfilment and loss (“Let’s think together in class about what we haven’t achieved so far and why?”).
- refer to the Adult ego state (“I think you’re old enough to take care of it yourself.”).
- encourage a certain group of physical exercises for relaxation (e.g., increasing and deepening free breathing, relaxing certain muscle groups, relaxing, etc.).

As in the other cases described here, the list of ways and possibilities of meaningful actions undertaken by the teacher in relation to the observed oral adaptation of the student is obviously not complete. However, understanding of such problems, their essence and nature, will reliably tell us what should be done and how.

Other personality adaptations will be presented in the following articles.

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Uczniowskie adaptacje osobowości, cz. I

Streszczenie

W trzech kolejnych artykułach ukazano przykłady uczniowskich adaptacji osobowości. Odwołując się do koncepcji analizy transakcyjnej oraz wiedzy z zakresu zaburzeń osobowości, przedstawiono szereg typowych cech i zachowań, dominujących potrzeb oraz wybranych parametrów AT, a także podano praktyczne wskazówki mogące pomóc nauczycielom i wychowawcom w rozumieniu swoich relacji z uczniami sprawiającymi kłopoty wynikające z problemów charakterologicznych. Wskazano też sposoby działań kompensacyjnych oraz interwencji w postaci afirmacji służących zapobieganiu ujawniających się przejawów dysfunkcyjnego rozwoju osobowości.

Słowa kluczowe: uczeń, adaptacje osobowości, schizoidalność, paranoidalność, oralność.