

UNIVERSITY AS A CENTER FOR SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THE WAR IN UKRAINE

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War is a word that burst into the lives of Ukrainians millions and stayed with them for almost two years. It has become an everyday occurrence for our citizens: to hear explosions, see flames, cry, be afraid, grieve, and cry again because of the loved one's loss. We see their pain, suffering, and destruction, but we do not see the inner pain and hidden suffering, that every Ukrainian carry in his or her heart. This is the pain that comes through the eyes of witnesses to the horrors of war, the pain that settles in the heart of every Ukrainian and pulsates depressingly in the head, causing the psychological imbalance in the personality as a whole. Internal imbalance turns into the external psychological instability state. So, the urgent qualified psychological assistance and supportive social measures are necessary now.

Therefore, various activities aimed at supporting the mental health of Ukrainians should be developed by creating certain centers for this rehabilitation work. Such centers can be schools and universities that have a strong information and educational potential for this, and, moreover, through the implemented distance learning, have the opportunity to communicate with young people.

The large-scale russian invasion of Ukraine led to changes in the civil people's mental health and caused the mental health crises [1]. According to the analysts of the National Institute for Strategic Studies: direct participation in hostilities, being under occupation, being under constant shelling (bombardment) are factors that increase the vulnerability of Ukrainian citizens to psychosocial stress. And a depression, an anxiety, post-stress disorders, etc. can be its manifestations [2].

Our research has shown that the psychological difficulties among students are. The surveyed students described their psychological state as depressed, noted the fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones, they had feelings of anxiety, and excitement due to the lack of the communication with their loved ones in the occupied territories [3].

At the same time, students in their questionnaires expressed sincere feelings of sympathy, support and gratitude to both teachers and their classmates for the fruitful cooperation in a wartime, and they demonstrated a strong sense of faith in a better future for their country as a whole. The students recognized that the positive thinking

is the tool that will help them overcome the darkest times in life, “considering the online education as an opportunity to switch an attention and plunge into another reality, that can transfer them to a peaceful student life [3]”.

A survey of teachers, as part of our research, revealed the teacher’s similar emotional state, and, namely, their teaching work saved them and gave them the opportunity to switch mentally. They really tried to support their students, communicated, and held classes under any circumstances. Teachers became a symbol of peaceful student life that stayed with them in these difficult times. And it had its positive results.

A. Velyanyk, in her article for the Ukrainian online media outlet “Svidomi”, raises the issue of a collective trauma. Her conversations with psychologists and psychotherapists demonstrate the urgent need to develop certain mechanisms to minimize the impact of a psychological trauma acquired during the war on future Ukrainian generations. For example, the journalist’s interlocutor Mariana Franko, a head of the Sense psychological studio, notes that a collective trauma needs to be recognized, shared and supported [4].

All of this is alarming and worrying for concerned scientists, public leaders, and government officials. And the complex psychological state of Ukrainian society awareness encourages the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to take appropriate initiatives, including the development and implementation of the All-Ukrainian Mental Health Program. Thus, two main trends have been identified: the transformation of the education and psychological services content in the education system. The first component means that changes will be introduced into the learning process to support the participants mental health in the study. The Concept of Reforming the Psychological Service in the Education System of Ukraine for the period up to 2030 has been developed to implement the second component [5].

In our point of view, the range of activities organized within the existing psychological support service framework at the university should be expanded. More attention should be paid to the teaching staff training to various situations, conducting outreach to teachers, providing more knowledge and conducting introductory as training activities with medical professionals. Firstly, it will increase the information teacher expertise in the “mental health” concept, secondly, it will provide teachers with certain medical knowledge, and thirdly, it will improve a practical knowledge for the effective recognition of mental health disorders of youth, and the primary care provision.

Thus, the nation’s mental health can be improved through systematic, comprehensive rehabilitation activities. Along with medical institutions, various governmental institutions and educational institutions, including universities, can be involved in such efforts, especially since many of them already have psychological support services.

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