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GROUP PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THERAPEUTIC ASSISTANCE IN THE FACE OF MODERN CHALLENGES

Анотація. У статті представлено комплексний аналіз групової психологічної та терапевтичної допомоги як ефективною відповіді на складні виклики сучасного суспільства, включаючи наслідки збройних конфліктів, травматичні переживання, тривалий стрес та соціально-економічну нестабільність. Групові інтервенції розглядаються в рамках доказової практики, з акцентом на їх структурованому характері, ролі професійного фасилітатора та терапевтичному потенціалі взаємодії між учасниками. Такі інтервенції не тільки надають учасникам можливості для спільного осмислення, взаємної підтримки та емоційної валідації, але й сприяють розвитку адаптивних стратегій подолання труднощів, емоційної регуляції та резильєнтності. Особлива увага приділяється застосуванню групових методів у роботі з посттравматичним стресовим розладом (ПТСР), тривогою та розладами емоційного функціонування, які є одними з найактуальніших проблем як в українському, так і в міжнародному контексті. Аналіз підкреслює ефективність психоосвітніх модулів, рольових ігор, технік усвідомленості та стратегій управління стресом у групових форматах, а також важливість залучення сім'ї та опікунів як посередників терапевтичних результатів. Крім того, у дослідженні розглядається зростаюче значення цифрових та гібридних групових втручань, які розширюють доступність та підтримують терапевтичну ефективність для груп населення з обмеженим доступом до індивідуальної терапії. Водночас у статті розглядається низка питань, пов'язаних із культурною та контекстуальною адаптацією групових втручань, врахуванням індивідуальних когнітивних та сенсорних відмінностей, а також необхідністю забезпечення інклюзивності та психологічної безпеки в рамках терапевтичного процесу. Стверджується, що інтеграція структурованого розвитку навичок, практик емоційної регуляції, взаємодії з однолітками та міждисциплінарних підходів робить групову терапію не тільки ефективним клінічним інструментом, але й соціально значущою практикою. Врешті-решт, групова психологічна та терапевтична допомога позиціонується як метод, що сприяє зміцненню

резистентності, відновленню соціального функціонування та сприянню благополуччю громади в умовах сучасних криз.

Ключові слова: групова психотерапія, психологічна допомога, травма, ПТСР, соціальна адаптація, підтримка сім'ї.

Abstract. The article presents a comprehensive analysis of group psychological and therapeutic assistance as an effective response to the complex challenges of contemporary society, including the consequences of armed conflict, traumatic experiences, prolonged stress, and socio-economic instability. Group interventions are considered within the framework of evidence-based practice, emphasizing their structured nature, the role of professional facilitation, and the therapeutic potential of peer interaction. Such interventions not only provide participants with opportunities for shared reflection, mutual support, and emotional validation but also facilitate the development of adaptive coping strategies, emotional regulation, and resilience. Special attention is devoted to the application of group methods in working with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and disorders of emotional functioning, which are among the most urgent problems in both Ukrainian and international contexts. The analysis highlights the effectiveness of psychoeducational modules, role-playing, mindfulness techniques, and stress-management strategies in group formats, while also underlining the importance of family and caregiver involvement as mediators of therapeutic outcomes. Furthermore, the study addresses the growing significance of digital and hybrid group interventions, which expand accessibility and maintain therapeutic efficacy for populations with limited access to individual therapy. At the same time, the article problematizes a number of issues related to the cultural and contextual adaptation of group interventions, the consideration of individual cognitive and sensory differences, and the need to ensure inclusivity and psychological safety within the therapeutic process. It is argued that the integration of structured skill-building, emotional regulation practices, peer interaction, and interdisciplinary approaches makes group therapy not only an effective clinical tool but also a socially significant practice. Ultimately, group psychological and therapeutic assistance is positioned as a modality that contributes to the strengthening of resilience, the restoration of social functioning, and the promotion of community well-being in the face of modern crises.

Key words: group psychotherapy, psychological assistance, trauma, PTSD, social adaptation, family support.

Formulation of the Problem. Modern psychological challenges, including armed conflicts, socio-economic instability, and prolonged exposure to stress, significantly affect individuals' mental health and social functioning. These conditions often lead to increased rates of anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), emotional dysregulation, and social withdrawal. Group-based psychological and therapeutic interventions provide a structured and socially supportive environment in which participants can share experiences, learn adaptive coping strategies, and receive guidance from both therapists and peers.

For individuals affected by trauma or complex life circumstances, group settings represent both a challenge and an opportunity: while collective environments may initially provoke stress or discomfort, they also offer critical contexts for social learning, emotional support, and resilience-building.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. Recent studies emphasize the effectiveness of structured group interventions in reducing anxiety, improving emotional

regulation, and supporting social functioning. Barkowski et al. [4] provide a systematic review showing that group psychotherapy significantly alleviates symptoms of anxiety disorders and enhances interpersonal skills. Masland, Finch, and Schnell [6] highlight that group therapy is effective in managing nonsuicidal self-injury, promoting both coping mechanisms and social connectedness. In the Ukrainian context, research underscores the psychological impact of war and socio-political crises. Garmash and Pashchenko [2] discuss strategies for supporting individuals affected by conflict, emphasizing the role of peer support and structured group activities in mitigating stress and trauma. Pavlyuk [3] demonstrates that group-based interventions for PTSD improve emotional regulation, provide psychoeducation, and foster resilience through collective problem-solving. Moreover, group therapy is recognized for its efficiency compared to individual therapy, as it combines peer learning, modeling of adaptive behaviors, and real-time feedback [7; 9]. Lorentzen [5] stresses that focused group analytic psychotherapy integrates clinical experience and research, allowing interventions to be adapted to diverse populations and contexts. Finally, family and caregiver involvement is considered essential. Gavrilovska [1] emphasizes that when caregivers participate in parallel or supporting roles, the therapeutic outcomes are reinforced, and skills acquired in group sessions are more likely to generalize to everyday life.

The purpose of this article is to examine the role of group psychological and therapeutic assistance in addressing modern challenges, such as trauma, war-related stress, and complex life situations. It aims to highlight evidence-based strategies for structuring group interventions that promote emotional regulation, resilience, and social functioning. The article also considers the importance of peer interaction, family involvement, and cultural adaptation in enhancing the effectiveness of group therapy. Furthermore, it integrates findings from both Ukrainian and international research to provide a comprehensive overview of contemporary group-based psychological support. Overall, the article seeks to offer practical guidance for professionals implementing group interventions in diverse and challenging contexts.

Outline of the main material. Group psychological and therapeutic interventions constitute a structured and evidence-based approach aimed at addressing the complex psychological challenges of contemporary life, including trauma, war-related stress, and prolonged exposure to socio-economic instability. Such interventions integrate professional guidance with peer interaction, enabling participants to share experiences, model adaptive coping strategies, and receive immediate feedback within a regulated social environment [1],[4]. Unlike individual therapy, group formats leverage the social dynamics of peer learning, providing opportunities for the acquisition of social and emotional skills through observation, imitation, and real-time reinforcement [5]. The organizational structure of group interventions typically encompasses both highly structured and semi-structured components. Structured elements include psychoeducational modules, role-playing, guided discussions, and targeted skill-building exercises, which provide participants with predictable frameworks for learning and behavioral rehearsal [2; 6]. Semi-structured or unstructured activities facilitate spontaneous interaction, emotional expression, and authentic peer support, thereby reinforcing social learning and fostering interpersonal competence [3]. The deliberate integration of these components ensures that participants develop practical coping strategies while simultaneously receiving social validation and emotional support. Social learning constitutes a central mechanism in group therapy. Through the observation of peers and

facilitators, participants internalize adaptive behaviors, effective emotion regulation strategies, and problem-solving approaches [1],[6]. This process is particularly critical for individuals affected by chronic stress or traumatic experiences, as it enables modeling of normative coping behaviors and reduces the sense of social isolation. Moreover, engagement in collective problem-solving enhances empathy, perspective-taking, and prosocial behavior, which are essential for successful reintegration into broader social environments [3].

Another essential aspect of group psychological and therapeutic interventions is the promotion of personal growth and self-awareness within a collective setting. Participants are provided with opportunities to explore their emotions, reflect on past experiences, and identify patterns of behavior that may hinder their well-being. The group context encourages individuals to articulate their thoughts and feelings, receive feedback from peers, and observe how others navigate similar challenges, which fosters deeper insight into one's own coping strategies and emotional responses. Through repeated practice in a safe and supportive environment, participants develop greater emotional intelligence, including skills such as empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution. Additionally, the shared experience of working through difficulties collectively strengthens a sense of belonging and social connectedness, reducing feelings of isolation and promoting mutual support. This process not only enhances participants' ability to manage stress and adversity but also cultivates a sense of agency and confidence, empowering them to apply learned strategies in broader life contexts such as family, work, and community interactions. Over time, these interventions contribute to the development of resilience, adaptive social functioning, and sustained psychological well-being, making group therapy a uniquely effective modality for navigating the multifaceted challenges of contemporary life.

Group interventions also play a pivotal role in emotional regulation. By providing structured opportunities for emotional expression, participants can practice adaptive responses to stress, anxiety, or intrusive memories in a controlled and supportive setting [2; 4]. Techniques such as mindfulness exercises, guided relaxation, and stress management strategies are frequently incorporated to enhance self-regulation capacities. Simultaneously, sharing personal experiences within the group context fosters mutual understanding, emotional validation, and increased self-awareness, thereby contributing to the development of psychological resilience [5]. Another important dimension of emotional regulation in group interventions is the use of experiential and creative techniques, such as role-playing, art therapy, and narrative practices. These methods allow participants to externalize difficult emotions, symbolically reconstruct traumatic experiences, and explore alternative ways of responding to stress in a safe environment. For instance, role-playing exercises provide opportunities to rehearse adaptive behaviors in challenging interpersonal situations, while art-based approaches facilitate nonverbal expression of emotions that may be difficult to articulate verbally. Narrative techniques, in turn, encourage participants to reframe personal experiences and integrate them into coherent life stories, fostering a sense of meaning and psychological continuity. The integration of such methods enhances the effectiveness of group work by addressing both cognitive and emotional dimensions of regulation, thereby ensuring a more holistic therapeutic impact.

In contexts of trauma and post-traumatic stress, group interventions have demonstrated robust efficacy. Evidence indicates that structured group programs improve emotional stability, reduce PTSD symptom severity, and facilitate adaptive coping through collective problem-solving

and social reinforcement [3; 7]. Psychoeducational components provide participants with knowledge about stress and trauma responses, while interactive exercises enable the rehearsal of adaptive strategies, promoting both symptom reduction and functional recovery. Participation in group therapy also facilitates the rebuilding of trust in social relationships, mitigating social withdrawal and enhancing interpersonal engagement [1]. Family and caregiver involvement is recognized as a critical factor enhancing the efficacy of group interventions. Engagement of family members either directly in sessions or through parallel support programs reinforces therapeutic gains, encourages skill generalization, and strengthens social support networks [1; 2]. This involvement also allows facilitators to monitor progress, tailor interventions to individual needs, and ensure continuity of care across multiple environments.

Group interventions serve a crucial function in the development of emotional regulation and the restoration of psychological balance, particularly for individuals who have experienced trauma or prolonged stress. By offering structured opportunities for expressing and processing emotions, these interventions create a safe environment in which participants can explore intense feelings, practice coping strategies, and develop greater self-awareness. Techniques such as guided relaxation, mindfulness exercises, and stress management activities are integrated to enhance participants' ability to recognize emotional triggers, modulate responses, and maintain a sense of calm under pressure. Within the group setting, sharing personal experiences promotes empathy, mutual understanding, and emotional validation, allowing participants to feel seen and supported while observing how others navigate similar challenges. Additionally, group work fosters the rebuilding of trust and interpersonal confidence, helping individuals re-engage with social networks that may have been disrupted by trauma, anxiety, or withdrawal. Involving family members and caregivers further strengthens the therapeutic impact, as their participation facilitates the reinforcement of learned skills in everyday contexts, supports continuity of care, and encourages the generalization of adaptive behaviors beyond the group environment. Collectively, these processes contribute to resilience, enhance coping mechanisms, and create a sense of belonging, ultimately equipping participants with the tools to navigate complex emotional experiences and to engage more effectively with their broader social and community environments.

Comparative research underscores the efficiency of group therapy relative to individual interventions. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses demonstrate that group formats yield comparable or superior outcomes in enhancing emotional regulation, social functioning, and overall psychological well-being [4; 5]. Moreover, structured group interventions have been successfully adapted to digital and hybrid formats, which expand accessibility and maintain efficacy for participants in geographically or logistically constrained contexts [6; 7]. Focused group analytic psychotherapy exemplifies the integration of clinical expertise with empirical research, emphasizing iterative feedback, session structure, and therapeutic facilitation to optimize outcomes [5]. Interventions targeting nonsuicidal self-injury similarly highlight the value of group settings for fostering social connection, practicing coping strategies, and reducing maladaptive behaviors [7]. Such evidence underscores the versatility and broad applicability of group-based approaches across diverse populations and psychological conditions.

Nevertheless, challenges persist in the implementation of group interventions. Participants may experience initial apprehension, reluctance to disclose personal information, or difficulties in

adapting to group dynamics. Facilitators must therefore balance structure and flexibility, providing culturally sensitive, inclusive, and psychologically safe environments [2; 3]. Attention to individual differences, cognitive and sensory needs, and contextual factors is essential to maximize engagement and therapeutic efficacy. Group psychological and therapeutic interventions represent a comprehensive and empirically supported modality for addressing the multifaceted psychological challenges of contemporary society. By integrating structured skill-building, peer interaction, emotional regulation, and family involvement, these interventions promote resilience, social competence, and adaptive coping across diverse populations [1; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7]. Evidence from both Ukrainian and international research confirms their effectiveness and practical applicability, underscoring the critical role of group-based approaches in modern mental health practice.

Critical aspect of group psychological and therapeutic interventions lies in their capacity to foster a sense of community and collective empowerment among participants. By engaging in shared experiences, individuals develop a perception of belonging and mutual support that extends beyond the immediate group setting. This collective dimension encourages participants to recognize that their challenges are not unique, reducing feelings of isolation and promoting psychological normalization of difficult experiences. The group context also allows for the development of leadership, collaborative problem-solving, and interpersonal negotiation skills, which are transferable to family, workplace, and social environments. Over time, repeated engagement in these supportive interactions strengthens self-efficacy, cultivates adaptive coping strategies, and reinforces resilience, enabling participants to navigate complex emotional and social challenges with greater confidence and autonomy. This social reinforcement, combined with structured therapeutic guidance, positions group interventions as a uniquely effective modality for promoting both individual growth and communal well-being.

Looking ahead, the future development of group psychological and therapeutic interventions requires a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary integration, evidence-based innovation, and contextual sensitivity. Advances in neuroscience, trauma studies, and positive psychology increasingly highlight the complex interplay between individual neurobiological processes and collective social dynamics, offering new pathways for refining group methodologies. Digital platforms and hybrid formats are expected to expand the accessibility of group therapy, particularly in contexts affected by war, migration, or limited access to professional services. However, successful implementation will depend on culturally informed adaptations, ethical considerations, and the training of facilitators capable of addressing diverse psychological and social needs. Furthermore, systematic evaluation and longitudinal research are essential to ensure the sustainability of therapeutic outcomes, as well as to identify factors that enhance resilience and post-traumatic growth across different populations. By combining clinical expertise, peer-based support, and innovative delivery models, group interventions have the potential not only to mitigate psychological distress but also to foster long-term individual and communal well-being, thus contributing to the strengthening of mental health systems in contemporary societies.

Conclusions

Group psychological and therapeutic interventions represent a vital and empirically grounded modality for addressing the complex psychological challenges of modern society. By integrating structured skill-building with opportunities for spontaneous interaction, such interventions create a balanced framework that supports both individual growth and collective

well-being. Evidence consistently demonstrates their effectiveness in promoting emotional regulation, reducing symptoms of trauma-related disorders, enhancing social competence, and strengthening resilience. Importantly, these interventions extend beyond symptom management, fostering self-awareness, interpersonal trust, and a sense of belonging, all of which are essential for long-term psychological stability. The adaptability of group formats to diverse populations and contexts, including digital and hybrid models, underscores their practical relevance and accessibility. At the same time, the incorporation of family and caregiver involvement amplifies therapeutic outcomes and ensures continuity of care across multiple life domains. Despite challenges related to group dynamics, disclosure, and cultural sensitivity, thoughtful facilitation and structured program design significantly enhance participant engagement and efficacy. In conclusion, group interventions provide a uniquely powerful means of addressing both individual and collective dimensions of mental health. By combining professional guidance, peer interaction, and community support, they not only alleviate psychological distress but also cultivate the skills, relationships, and resilience necessary for thriving in an increasingly complex and demanding world.

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