

PSYCHOLOGY OF PERSONALITY

UDC 364.4:159.922.8:613.86

DOI: 10.31652/2786-6033-2026-5(3)-56-62

Kateryna Lichman,

State Institution “Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University”

Poltava, (Ukraine)

PhD student of the third (educational and scientific) level of higher education,
Specialization I10 Social Work and Counseling

k.v.lichman@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6174-6882>

**CATEGORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF "MENTAL HEALTH" IN THE
CONTEXT OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS**

У статті представлено авторські напрацювання щодо дослідження проблеми збереження ментального здоров'я підлітків в умовах тривалих воєнних дій на території України. Акцентовано на необхідності термінологічного розмежування понять «ментальне здоров'я» та «психічне здоров'я». Метою статті є здійснення категоріального аналізу концепту «ментальне здоров'я», виокремлення його складників та обґрунтування їхнього зв'язку із віковими завданнями розвитку підлітків, зокрема у контексті тривалих воєнних дій на території України.

Методологія дослідження ґрунтується на теоретичному аналізі та узагальненні наукових джерел, зокрема концептуального визначення Всесвітньої організації охорони здоров'я, багатокомпонентної моделі здоров'я Б. Райна в інтерпретації Н. Зимівець, а також комплексного підходу Л. Калашникової, Ю. Руденко та С. Руденка до розуміння сутності ментального здоров'я. Застосовано порівняльний аналіз понять «ментальне здоров'я» і «психічне здоров'я», а також структурно-функціональний аналіз вікових потреб, завдань розвитку підліткового періоду (соціально-культурних та соціально-психологічних) та відповідних психосоціальних новоутворень у їхньому взаємозв'язку зі складниками ментального здоров'я. Обґрунтовано необхідність доповнення переліку вікових соціально-психологічних завдань розвитку підлітків такими специфічними завданнями, як формування життєстійкості, нарощування особистісного адаптаційного потенціалу та мобілізації внутрішніх ресурсів особистості.

Наукова новизна дослідження полягає в авторському обґрунтуванні концепту «ментальне здоров'я» як інтегративного феномену, що поєднує емоційний, інтелектуальний, соціальний та духовний виміри благополуччя особистості за умови психічного виміру як їхнього необхідного базису; уперше встановлено зв'язок між складниками ментального здоров'я підлітків та соціально-культурними й соціально-психологічними завданнями їхнього розвитку; розширено перелік соціально-психологічних завдань підліткового віку за рахунок формування життєстійкості, нарощування адаптаційного потенціалу та мобілізації внутрішніх ресурсів особистості в умовах пролонгованого стресу воєнного часу.

Установлено, що формування ментального здоров'я підлітків нерозривно пов'язане з успішним розв'язанням соціально-культурних і соціально-психологічних завдань їхнього розвитку, а набуті внаслідок цього психосоціальні новоутворення забезпечують стан цілісного благополуччя особистості згідно з концепцією ВООЗ. Узагальнено, що здійснене теоретичне осмислення багатовимірності досліджуваного феномену закладає концептуальне підґрунтя для розроблення фахівцями соціальної сфери практичного інструментарію психосоціальної підтримки ментального здоров'я підлітків із урахуванням їхніх вікових завдань розвитку.

Ключові слова: завдання розвитку підлітків, категоріальний аналіз, ментальне здоров'я, підлітковий вік, психічне здоров'я, психосоціальна підтримка.

This article presents the author's research findings on the issue of preserving adolescents' mental health amid prolonged hostilities in Ukraine. It emphasizes the need to distinguish terminologically between the concepts of “mental health” and “psychological health.” The purpose of the article is to conduct a categorical analysis of the concept of “mental health,” identify its components, and substantiate their connection to the developmental tasks of adolescents, particularly in the context of the war in Ukraine.

The research methodology is based on a theoretical analysis and synthesis of scientific sources, including the conceptual definition provided by the World Health Organization, B. Ryan's multicomponent model of health as interpreted by N. Zymivets, as well as the comprehensive approach of L. Kalashnikova, Yu. Rudenko, and S. Rudenko to understanding the essence of mental health. A comparative analysis of the concepts of "mental health" and "psychological health" was conducted, as well as a structural-functional analysis of age-related needs, developmental tasks of adolescence (sociocultural and sociopsychological), and corresponding psychosocial acquisitions in their interrelation with the components of mental health. The paper justifies the need to supplement the list of age-related sociopsychological developmental tasks for adolescents with specific tasks such as developing resilience, enhancing personal adaptive potential, and mobilizing the individual's internal resources.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in the author's justification of the concept of "mental health" as an integrative phenomenon that combines the emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual dimensions of an individual's well-being, with the psychological dimension serving as their essential foundation; for the first time, a connection has been established between the components of mental health of adolescents and the sociocultural and sociopsychological tasks of their development has been established; the list of sociopsychological tasks of adolescence has been expanded to include the development of resilience, the enhancement of adaptive potential, and the mobilization of the individual's internal resources under conditions of prolonged wartime stress.

It has been established that the development of adolescents' mental health is inextricably linked to the successful resolution of the sociocultural and sociopsychological challenges of their development, and the resulting psychosocial acquisitions ensure a state of holistic well-being in accordance with the WHO concept. It is concluded that the theoretical analysis of the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon under study lays the conceptual foundation for social workers to develop practical tools for providing psychosocial support for adolescents' mental health, taking into account their age-specific developmental challenges.

Keywords: adolescent developmental tasks, categorical analysis, mental health, adolescence, psychological health, psychosocial support.

Problem statement. An individual's mental health is recognized as a fundamental and integral component of their overall well-being, a basic prerequisite for full self-actualization, overcoming life crises, and productive functioning in society [8]. Amid prolonged military hostilities in Ukraine, adolescents – as a vulnerable population group – have faced a series of unprecedented challenges to their mental health. In particular, M. Slyusarevsky identified the following: the acquisition of tragic life experiences uncharacteristic of childhood, which is directly linked to the intense experience of loss and forced premature maturation; the negative impact of traumatic events on their psycho-emotional state and cognitive functions, manifested through depression, anxiety, and depressive disorders, reduced cognitive activity, as well as disorders of the motivational-volitional sphere and manifestations of aggression in the adolescent environment [6, pp. 7–8]. The lack of timely, qualified assistance can lead to serious long-term consequences, complicating the young person's future social integration and triggering the development of psychological disorders in adulthood. Given the scale and depth of these threats, safeguarding the mental health of adolescents is now recognized as one of the priority tasks of public policy and a key focus of activity for professionals in the social sector and the fields of psychology and education [5, p. 3]. We argue that the development of effective mechanisms for psychosocial support and the preservation of well-being for this group requires a deep theoretical understanding of the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon of mental health and the specifics of its development during adolescence.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The issue of maintaining the mental health of the younger generation is being thoroughly studied by researchers in the fields of social work and social psychology. Certain aspects of this issue are highlighted in the works of V. Panok (2022), M. Slyusarevsky & L. Hryhorovska (2022), O. Kravchenko (2023), I. Piesha & T. Andriuchenko (2023), O. Klochko & O. Klochko (2024), Ya. Omelchenko (2024), O. Shevchuk (2025), and others. Currently, the focus of scientific research is on the socio-psychological support of the mental health of children and adolescents and their socio-psychological rehabilitation during hostilities in Ukraine; prevention of destructive phenomena that threaten the mental well-being of these categories; preservation of the mental health of participants in the educational process in crisis conditions, etc. In the context of the investigated problem, the scientific research of L. Kalashnikova, Yu. Rudenko, S. Rudenko (2024) and S. Dubych (2024), dedicated to substantiating the essence of the concept of "mental health," is important.

At the same time, it should be noted that despite scholars' attention to this issue and the widespread use of the term "mental health" in domestic academic discourse, there is a certain lack of terminological clarity, which often leads to its conflation with the concept of "psychological health." Furthermore, the issue of comprehensively understanding the components of mental health and their deep interconnection with the key sociocultural and sociopsychological challenges of adolescence remains insufficiently explored.

The purpose of this article is to conduct a categorical analysis of the concept of "mental health"; to identify the components of mental health; and to substantiate their connection with the age-related developmental challenges of adolescents, particularly in the context of the war in Ukraine.

Presentation of the main research material. According to the WHO definition, *mental health* is a state of well-being and welfare in which an individual realizes their creative potential, can cope with life's stresses, work productively, and contribute to the life of the community [8]. We state that the above definition is not limited to describing solely the psychological dimension of an individual's health.

The concept of "*psychological health*," with its distinct clinical and diagnostic connotations, primarily indicates the absence of mental disorders and illnesses in a person, their adequate perception of the surrounding reality, and the conformity of their mental processes to neurophysiological developmental norms. In contrast, "*mental health*," as a broader, integrative concept, encompasses not only the aforementioned indicators of psychological well-being but also an individual's ability to successfully adapt and function in society, as well as their striving for self-actualization and creative self-expression.

In the Ukrainian academic community, the concept of "mental health" is primarily viewed as a generalized, comprehensive description of the psychological and psycho-emotional state of an individual or social group; it is emphasized that this concept is not linked to the diagnosis of a specific mental disorder or illness [1, p. 93]. Based on our observations, Ukrainian researchers often use the terms "mental health" and "psychological health" interchangeably in their work.

The conflation of the terms "mental health" and "psychological health" is largely due to the specifics of translating the English concept "mental health," which in Ukrainian academic discourse can be interpreted in two ways: both as "mental" and as "psychological" health. In this context, we consider N. Zymivets's observation regarding the use of the term "mental" in the original English-language WHO documents to be valuable. The researcher emphasized that this term, which has Latin origins, is significantly broader in essence and, in addition to the purely *psychological* dimension, encompasses *spiritual* and *intellectual* components [3, p. 48]. N. Zymivets disclosed their meaningful content based on B. Ryan's comprehensive model of health. [3, p. 48].

According to this model, the *spiritual* component of mental health manifests itself in an individual's ability to define, formulate, and shape their own life in accordance with a conscious sense of purpose and meaning, to strive for a creative and meaningful existence, to give and receive love, and to contribute to the spiritual well-being of others. The *intellectual* component involves a person's ability to find necessary information, acquire knowledge from a wide variety of sources, and effectively assimilate it; an individual must successfully apply their accumulated intellectual potential to make well-considered life decisions, particularly those directly related to the functioning of their own body [3, p. 48]. While agreeing with the scholar's conclusions regarding the distinction between the psychological, spiritual, and intellectual components of mental health, we note that, in light of the WHO's conceptual definition, this triad does not fully capture the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon.

That is precisely why, in the context of our research, we find the arguments of L. Kalashnikova, Yu. Rudenko, and S. Rudenko compelling; they examined the concept of "mental health" through the lens of a comprehensive approach. The researchers identified three system-forming components of mental health. The first is defined as mentality, understood as a person's general spiritual disposition toward their own well-being and that of those around them; the second is the balance between an individual's emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being; and the third is a person's harmony with the surrounding world and with themselves [4, p. 79]. According to the researchers, it is precisely the unity of these components that makes mental health an essential foundation for an individual's successful social adaptation to conditions of instability, a guarantee for effectively overcoming life crises, maintaining inner balance, and engaging in resourceful interaction with society.

Summarizing the approaches outlined above by the WHO and Ukrainian researchers, we conclude that the concept of "mental health" goes beyond a purely clinical-diagnostic interpretation and emerges as a complex, integrative phenomenon rooted in the profound unity of the *emotional*, *intellectual*, *social*, and *spiritual* dimensions of an individual's well-being. Within the framework of the authors' understanding of the concept, we believe that the spiritual dimension encompasses mentality as a person's general spiritual

orientation toward well-being (both their own and that of their surroundings), as well as their harmony with the surrounding world and with themselves; however, it is not limited to these two aspects. At the same time, the *psychological* dimension of health serves as the necessary foundation upon which this multifaceted unity is built. Overall, given the complex architecture of the phenomenon, the overarching idea of the analyzed theoretical approaches is the understanding of mental health as a proactive state of the individual that ensures successful social adaptation, the ability to constructively overcome life's challenges and stress, maintain inner harmony, and ensure full social functioning.

Since the concept of "adolescent mental health" is at the center of the stated problem, we will examine age-related needs, the key developmental tasks of adolescence, and their connection to mental health.

Researchers consider a person's personal needs to be an effective internal mechanism that stimulates an individual's subjective activity and directs them toward successfully resolving age-related tasks. Among the basic *needs of adolescence*, researchers specifically identify the following: the need for respect and unconditional acceptance; the presence of clear but not rigid boundaries and rules established by adults; the need for development and learning through real-life experience; the desire for exciting life experiences and pleasure; the need for recognition, as well as for communication and acceptance by peers; and the need for creative self-expression, self-actualization, and the development of life prospects [7, p. 43]. Satisfying these needs is an essential foundation for accomplishing *the key developmental tasks of adolescence*. In the professional literature on social work, these tasks are typically categorized into three groups: *natural-cultural*, *socio-cultural*, and *socio-psychological* [2, p. 130]. In the context of our research, we will examine the sociocultural and sociopsychological tasks of adolescence, since their successful resolution is closely intertwined with the formation of the basic structural components of an adolescent's mental health.

The fulfillment of *sociocultural developmental tasks* plays an important role in shaping an individual's cognitive and value spheres. In particular, mastering the knowledge covered in the school curriculum and actively testing one's abilities in various areas of interest directly ensure the development of the *intellectual* component of mental health, stimulating the accumulation of the necessary cognitive potential of the individual. This established intellectual foundation enables adolescents to effectively process information and apply it to make well-considered, independent decisions that directly relate to their daily lives and the preservation of their own health.

At the same time, the development of group solidarity, the embrace of lofty romantic ideals (loyalty, friendship, courage, honor, etc.), value- and meaning-based self-definition, and purposeful self-development in significant areas of life serve as a powerful catalyst for the *spiritual* dimension of an adolescent's mental health, enriching their existence with value-based guidelines and profound meanings. Consequently, it is precisely through the fulfillment of these tasks that a young person acquires the ability to shape their own life in accordance with a conscious goal, learns to give and receive love, and strives for a life filled with creative meaning.

The comprehensive resolution of *socio-psychological developmental tasks*, encompassing the overcoming of the crisis of personal identity and status uncertainty between childhood and adolescence through autonomization from adults, identification with a reference group of peers, and the acquisition of self-regulation skills in significant spheres of behavior and relationships, lays a solid foundation for the *social* and *emotional* dimensions of a young person's mental health. Thanks to the fulfillment of these tasks, a teenager learns to adequately realize their feelings and experiences, consciously manage their emotional state, and build constructive and supportive relationships with their environment.

Given that, in the current context of uncertainty and the devastating impact of war on Ukrainian society, adolescents are recognized as one of the most vulnerable age groups, we consider it appropriate to expand the list of socio-psychological developmental tasks for adolescence. In particular, it is currently essential to foster resilience in adolescents, enhance their personal adaptive capacity, and mobilize their internal resources to ensure they can function fully under conditions of prolonged stress.

The need to substantiate these additional developmental tasks is due to the fact that the psychosocial challenges of wartime acutely actualize the individual's needs for basic safety, adaptation to uncertainty, and protection under conditions of prolonged stress. The needs actualized by the war direct the adolescent to solve new, time-dictated developmental tasks. Their successful resolution is accompanied by the emergence of fundamentally important psychosocial acquisitions – formed and strengthened protective psychosocial mechanisms of the adolescent, as well as their ability to ensure full life activity under wartime conditions. We assert that gaining these acquisitions creates conditions for strengthening the *emotional* and *social* dimensions of the growing individual's mental health in the context of the crisis challenges of war.

These psychosocial acquisitions find their direct expression in specific adaptive manifestations of the adolescent: in particular, mastering self-regulation skills under conditions of prolonged stress and uncertainty strengthens the *emotional* dimension of the adolescent's mental health, while maintaining the ability for constructive interaction with the environment ensures the stability of its *social* dimension. Therefore, strengthening these protective psychosocial mechanisms is critically important, as it contributes to the preservation of the mental health of the younger generation of Ukrainians under the conditions of acute socio-psychological challenges of wartime.

Systematization of the above theoretical provisions of the study allows us to visually present the dynamic nature of the formation of adolescents' mental health through the prism of their life activity and development. Since each of the identified needs of adolescence serves as an internal stimulating mechanism of the individual's subjective activity, it directs the personality to the resolution of corresponding age-related developmental tasks. Their successful resolution is accompanied by the adolescents' acquisition of corresponding psychosocial acquisitions, which, in turn, act as a direct source of filling and supporting the intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional dimensions of their mental health.

Table 1 visually presents the structural and functional connections between *the age-related needs* of adolescents, their *developmental tasks*, acquired *psychosocial acquisitions*, and the corresponding *dimensions of mental health*. The proposed logical-structural construction takes into account both the basic age-related needs and traditional developmental tasks of the adolescent period, as well as the socio-psychological tasks additionally substantiated by us, caused by the challenges of wartime.

Table 1.

Interrelationship of age-related needs, developmental tasks, psychosocial acquisitions, and dimensions of adolescent mental health

Adolescent's age-related needs	Developmental tasks	Psychosocial acquisitions	Dimension of mental health
Development and learning through life practice.	Socio-cultural (cognitive sphere): mastering knowledge in the volume of the school course; active trial of strength in various spheres of interests.	Accumulated cognitive potential of the personality; ability to effectively operate with information; ability to make balanced independent decisions regarding their own life activity and health.	Intellectual
Creative self-expression, self-realization, and building life perspectives; the desire for interesting events and pleasure.	Socio-cultural (value-semantic sphere): formation of group solidarity; involvement in high romantic ideals (loyalty, friendship, courage, honor, etc.); value-semantic self-determination; purposeful self-education.	Ability to build one's own life in accordance with a conscious goal; ability to give and receive love; striving for an existence filled with creative content.	Spiritual
Recognition, communication, and acceptance by peers; respect and unconditional acceptance; the need for clear, but not rigid boundaries.	Socio-psychological (normative): overcoming the crisis of personal identity and status uncertainty; autonomization from adults; identification with a reference group of peers; acquisition of self-regulation skills.	Ability to adequately realize one's own feelings and experiences; ability to consciously manage the emotional state; ability to build constructive and supportive relationships with the environment.	Social and emotional
Basic safety, adaptation to uncertainty, and protection under conditions of prolonged stress.	Expanded socio-psychological (caused by the challenges of war): formation of resilience; growth of personal adaptive potential; mobilization of internal resources.	Formed and strengthened protective psychosocial mechanisms of the adolescent; ability to ensure full life activity under wartime conditions.	Emotional and social (in the context of psychosocial challenges of war)

Conclusions. Summarizing the above considerations, we conclude that the concept of “mental health” is not limited to a narrowly medical understanding but emerges as a complex, integrative phenomenon that combines the emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual dimensions of an individual’s well-being. The psychological dimension of health serves as the necessary foundation upon which the unity of these components is built.

The development of mental health during adolescence is inextricably linked to addressing a range of sociocultural and sociopsychological developmental challenges. Since the psychosocial challenges of war acutely highlight an individual’s needs for basic safety, adaptation to uncertainty, and protection under conditions of prolonged stress, there is a need to expand the list of developmental tasks for adolescents to include specific tasks such as building resilience, building personal adaptive capacity, and mobilizing the individual’s internal resources. The psychosocial acquisitions adolescents acquire while addressing these specific tasks create the conditions for strengthening the emotional and social dimensions of the younger generation’s mental health amid the crisis conditions of war.

In general, the successful and comprehensive resolution of these challenges forms the basis of adolescents’ mental health, since the psychosocial acquisitions they acquire shape a state of holistic well-being in which, according to the WHO’s concept, an individual is capable of successfully coping with life’s stresses, fully realizing their creative abilities, and making a constructive contribution to social life.

Consequently, the theoretical analysis conducted in this article – which examines the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon of mental health and the specifics of its development in the context of adolescents’ age-related developmental challenges – lays the necessary conceptual foundation for practical solutions to the problem of preserving the well-being of this demographic group. We assert that mechanisms for psychosocial support of adolescents’ mental health should be based on targeted assistance in addressing their age-related developmental challenges. This conceptual approach provides a methodological basis for specialists to develop practical tools aimed at preserving the mental health of school-age youth.

Prospects for further research. The relationship between the components of mental health and the age-related developmental challenges of adolescents, as substantiated in this article, will serve as a theoretical foundation for further exploration of this issue and for the development of practical tools to support the mental well-being of adolescents in the school setting.

References

1. Dubych, S. (2024). *Poniattia mentalnoho zdorovia osobystosti u pratsiakh ukrainskykh ta zarubizhnykh vchenykh* [The concept of an individual's mental health in the works of Ukrainian and foreign scholars]. *Orhanizatsiina psykholohiia. Ekonomichna psykholohiia*, 33(3–4), 86–96. <https://doi.org/10.31108/2.2024.3.33.8> [in Ukrainian].
2. Zvierieva, I. D., Bezpalko, O. V., Kharchenko, S. Ya. et al. (2004). *Sotsialna robota v Ukraini* [Social work in Ukraine] (I. D. Zvierieva & H. M. Laktionova, Eds.). Tsentr navchalnoi literatury. https://bahmat.at.ua/zvereva_socialna_robota.pdf [in Ukrainian].
3. Zymivets, N. V. (2012). *Zdorovia* [Health]. In I. D. Zvierieva (Ed.), *Entsyklopediia dlia fakhivtsiv sotsialnoi sfery* [Encyclopedia for social sphere specialists] (pp. 48–51). Universum. <https://elibrary.kubg.edu.ua/id/eprint/3491/> [in Ukrainian].
4. Kalashnykova, L. V., Rudenko, Yu. Yu., & Rudenko, S. A. (2024). Rozuminnia sutnosti mentalnoho zdorovia v konteksti kompleksnoho pidkhodu [Understanding the essence of mental health in the context of a comprehensive approach]. *Naukovi zapysky. Serii: Psykholohiia*, 1(3), 74–81. <https://doi.org/10.32782/cusu-psy-2024-1-10>.
5. Omelchenko, Ya. M. (2024). Zberezhennia mentalnoho zdorovia ditei v osvitiomu seredovyschi u suchasnykh kryzovykh umovakh: Naukova dopovid zahalnym zboram NAPN Ukrainy “Zakhyst i pidtrymka mentalnoho zdorovia ukraintsiv v umovakh voiennoho stanu: vyklyky i vidpovidi” 22 lyst. 2024 r. [Preserving children's mental health in the educational environment in modern crisis conditions: Scientific report to the general meeting of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine “Protection and support of the mental health of Ukrainians under martial law: challenges and answers”, November 22, 2024]. *Visnyk Natsionalnoi akademii pedahohichnykh nauk Ukrainy*, 6(2), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.37472/v.naes.2024.6223> [in Ukrainian].
6. Sliusarevskiy, M. M. (2022). Sotsialno-psykholohichni stan ukrainskoho suspilstva v umovakh povnomasshtabnoho rosiiskoho vtorhnnennia: Nahalni vyklyky i vidpovidi: naukova dopovid na zasidanni

Prezydii NAPN Ukrainy 21 kvitnia 2022 r. [Socio-psychological state of the Ukrainian society in the conditions of full-scale Russian invasion: Urgent challenges and answers: scientific report at the meeting of the Presidium of the NAES of Ukraine, April 21, 2022]. *Visnyk Natsionalnoi akademii pedahohichnykh nauk Ukrainy*, 4(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.37472/v.naes.2022.4124> [in Ukrainian].

7. Tokareva, N. M., Shamne, A. V., & Makarenko, N. M. (2014). *Suchasnyi pidlitok u systemi psykhologo-pedahohichnoho suprovodu: Monohrafiia* [The modern teenager in the system of psychological and pedagogical support: A monograph]. TOV VNP “Interservis”. <http://elibrary.kdpu.edu.ua/handle/0564/1760> [in Ukrainian].

8. World Health Organization. (2025, October 8). *Mental health*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>.

The article has been submitted to the editorial board 22.06.2026

The article has been recommended for publication 28.08.2026

The article was published on 31.08.2026