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**AN ANDRAGOGICAL APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL INTERACTION BETWEEN
SOCIAL SERVICE CENTRE PROFESSIONALS AND WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

Анотація

Мета. У статті теоретично обґрунтовано андрагогічний підхід до професійної взаємодії фахівців центрів соціальних служб із жінками, які постраждали від домашнього насильства, та розроблено концептуальну модель такої взаємодії. Вихідною стала теза про наявність у соціально-правовій допомозі освітнього складника: доросла людина осмислює власну ситуацію, набуває знань про права й доступні ресурси, опановує алгоритми захисту, вчиться взаємодіяти з установами та переносити отриману інформацію у практичні дії.

Методологія. Застосовано аналіз і синтез наукових праць з андрагогіки, соціальної роботи та допомоги постраждалим від домашнього насильства; аналіз нормативно-правових документів, професійних стандартів і програм; поняттєво-термінологічне зіставлення; теоретичне узагальнення; структурно-функціональне та концептуальне моделювання. Методологічну основу становлять андрагогічний, компетентнісний, клієнт-центрований, партисипативний і травмоінформований підходи.

Наукова новизна. Запропоновано авторське визначення андрагогічно орієнтованої професійної взаємодії у соціально-правовій допомозі. Розроблена модель охоплює ціннісно-цільовий, андрагогічно-діагностичний, змістовий, процесуально-технологічний і рефлексивно-результативний компоненти. Обґрунтовано принципи суб'єктності, проблемно-ситуаційної спрямованості, практичної застосовності, опори на досвід, діалогічності, доступності, безпеки та поступового переходу від супроводжуваної до самостійної дії. Визначено андрагогічну компетентність фахівця та схарактеризовано її ціннісно-етичний, діагностично-аналітичний, інформаційно-змістовий, комунікативно-фасилітаційний, проєктувально-технологічний, травмоінформовано-безпековий і рефлексивно-оцінювальний компоненти.

Висновки. Андрагогічний підхід увиразнює механізми, завдяки яким соціальна й правова інформація стає зрозумілим, особисто значущим і практично застосовним знанням. Його інтеграція з клієнт-центрованим, партисипативним і травмоінформованим підходами підтримує суб'єктність жінки, посилює її здатність до поінформованого вибору й запобігає директивності професійної допомоги. Запропонована модель потребує експертного оцінювання та емпіричної апробації.

Ключові слова: андрагогічна компетентність; андрагогічний підхід; домашнє насильство; жінки, які постраждали; професійна взаємодія; соціально-правова допомога; соціальні служби.

Abstract

The article provides a theoretical rationale for applying an andragogical approach to professional interaction between social service centre professionals and women who have experienced domestic violence and develops a conceptual model of such interaction. The study is based on the premise that socio-legal assistance contains an educational component: an adult reflects on her circumstances, acquires knowledge of her rights and available resources, masters protection strategies, learns to interact with relevant institutions, and translates the information received into practical action.

The study employed analysis and synthesis of scholarly works on andragogy, social work, and assistance to survivors of domestic violence; analysis of legislation, professional standards, and programmes; conceptual and terminological comparison; theoretical generalisation; and structural-functional and conceptual modelling. The methodological framework integrates andragogical, competency-based, client-centred, participatory, and trauma-informed approaches.

The article offers an original definition of andragogically oriented professional interaction within socio-legal assistance. The proposed model comprises value-and-goal, andragogical-diagnostic, content-related, process-and-technology, and reflective-and-outcome components. It substantiates the principles of

agency, problem- and situation-based orientation, practical applicability, reliance on experience, dialogue, accessibility, safety, and gradual transition from supported to independent action. The andragogical competence of a professional is defined, and its value-and-ethical, diagnostic-and-analytical, information-and-content, communication-and-facilitation, design-and-technology, trauma-informed-and-safety, and reflective-and-evaluative components are characterised.

The andragogical approach elucidates the mechanisms through which social and legal information becomes comprehensible, personally meaningful, and practically applicable knowledge. Its integration with client-centred, participatory, and trauma-informed approaches supports women's agency, strengthens their capacity to make informed choices, and prevents professional assistance from becoming directive. The proposed model requires expert evaluation and empirical validation.

Keywords: andragogical competence; andragogical approach; domestic violence; women who have experienced violence; professional interaction; socio-legal assistance; social services.

Introduction

The full-scale war has intensified economic instability, housing insecurity, forced displacement, psychological exhaustion, and the dependence of a considerable proportion of the population on their immediate social environment. For women experiencing domestic violence, these circumstances create additional barriers to seeking assistance, relocating, regaining financial independence, and accessing social, medical, and legal services. The development of specialised services and municipal response systems in Ukraine is intended to improve the accessibility of assistance, strengthen interagency cooperation, and enhance the professional capacity of local communities (UNFPA Ukraine, 2024).

At the same time, domestic violence has deeper sociocultural underpinnings. Its concealment is reinforced by perceptions of family problems as private matters, expectations that relationships should be preserved under all circumstances, and notions of women's endurance, self-sacrifice, and responsibility for family well-being. Prolonged coercive control, isolation, economic restriction, intimidation, stalking, and systematic devaluation gradually narrow a woman's range of perceived choices and undermine confidence in her own judgement (Stark, 2007). Under such circumstances, seeking professional assistance involves the need to make sense of lived experience, recognise violence, obtain information about rights and available resources, evaluate the possible consequences of different courses of action, and develop an acceptable protection strategy.

The legal and organisational foundations for such assistance are established by the Laws of Ukraine *On Prevention and Counteraction to Domestic Violence*, *On Social Services*, and *On Free Legal Aid*, as well as by the Procedure for Interaction among Entities Implementing Measures to Prevent and Combat Domestic and Gender-Based Violence and the Procedure for Organising the Provision of Social Services and Case Management (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2011, 2017, 2019; Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy, 2018, 2026). These regulatory instruments provide for the assessment of individual needs, identification of the recipient's personal goals, development of an individual plan, informed consent, coordination of interventions, and evaluation of outcomes.

The quality of professional assistance depends on how these procedures are implemented in direct interaction. Providing a list of institutions, handing out an information leaflet, or offering a ready-made course of action does not guarantee that the woman understands the content or implications of the proposed steps. Legal information may be excessively complex, fragmented, or disconnected from the immediate concern. Emotional distress, fear, previous negative experiences with institutions, digital surveillance by the perpetrator, and responsibility for children may affect concentration, memory, trust, and readiness to take practical action.

Professional interaction between a social service centre professional and a woman who has experienced domestic violence contains a distinct educational component. In the course of receiving assistance, an adult obtains and interprets information about forms of violence, the rights of survivors, special protection measures, social services, free legal aid, housing and financial resources, digital safety, and possible courses of action. She relates new knowledge to her life experience, assesses its relevance to her particular circumstances, develops ways of interacting with institutions, and gradually becomes more capable of acting independently.

We propose that this process be understood as an **educational micro-process embedded in socio-legal assistance**. Its outcome is the adult's capacity to understand her situation, assess available options and risks, formulate requests, access relevant resources, and make informed decisions. This perspective highlights the andragogical dimension of the professional activity of social service centre staff.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundations of adult learning are closely associated with M. Knowles's andragogical model. Its key assumptions concern an adult's orientation towards self-direction, the significance of accumulated experience, readiness to learn in response to life tasks, problem-centred learning, the need to understand the practical value of knowledge, and the importance of internal motivation (Knowles et al., 2020). Contemporary studies confirm the heuristic value of these principles in various areas of professional learning while emphasising the need to adapt them to the specific context, objectives, and characteristics of participants (Knapke et al., 2024; Mukhalalati & Taylor, 2019).

Within Ukrainian scholarship, the conceptual and methodological foundations of adult education have been comprehensively developed by L. Lukianova. She conceptualises adult education as an open system linked to an individual's personal, professional, and social needs and emphasises its practical orientation, recognition of agency, reliance on experience, and the professional's partnership-based position (Lukianova, 2020). In O. Anishchenko's works, andragogical competence encompasses the ability to identify educational needs, organise dialogue, select appropriate methods, facilitate reflection, and evaluate the outcomes of interaction with adults (Anishchenko, 2022). M. Vovk, N. Filipchuk, Yu. Hryshchenko, S. Solomakha, and L. Sultanova systematised adult learning technologies used in formal and non-formal education, emphasising interactivity, experience-based learning, practical relevance, and the participant's active position (Vovk et al., 2020).

J. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning complements the andragogical model by focusing on the critical reassessment of established meaning perspectives. Transformation occurs when adults reconsider habitual interpretations of their experience, compare them with new information, and expand their capacity for informed choice (Mezirow, 2000). In addressing the consequences of domestic violence, this proposition is relevant to the need to reconsider normalised beliefs concerning the acceptability of control, survivors' responsibility for the violence, or the perceived impossibility of obtaining assistance. Such critical reflection, however, requires a safe environment, voluntary participation, and respect for the woman's pace.

Ukrainian studies of social work with women who have experienced domestic violence reveal the complexity of their needs and the necessity of coordinated social, psychological, medical, and legal support. H. Skipalska, T. Liakh, and N. Klishevych emphasise the systemic nature of the problems faced by survivors and the need for qualified interdisciplinary assistance (Skipalska et al., 2021). T. Poberezhets associates the effectiveness of social work with the professional preparation of staff and the development of appropriate support technologies (Poberezhets, 2023). O. Karpenko, Zh. Petrochko, and T. Spirina describe the role of civil society and charitable organisations in counselling, legal information provision, referral, safe accommodation, and case management (Karpenko et al., 2023).

International research on assistance to survivors has developed the concepts of empowerment, advocacy, survivor-defined practice, and trauma-informed interaction. L. B. Cattaneo and L. A. Goodman associate empowerment with a person's capacity to define personally meaningful goals, use environmental resources, and gain greater control over important areas of life (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015). L. A. Goodman and her colleagues conceptualise survivor-defined practice in terms of supporting survivors' own goals, building partnership-based relationships, and maintaining sensitivity to their life context (Goodman et al., 2016). C. M. Sullivan and L. A. Goodman define advocacy as facilitating access to resources, addressing institutional barriers, and supporting women's decisions (Sullivan & Goodman, 2019).

A trauma- and violence-informed approach directs attention to the effects of interpersonal violence, social inequality, and structural barriers on behaviour, health, and access to assistance. Its principles include physical, emotional, and cultural safety, collaboration, choice, a strengths-based orientation, and the development of individual capacities (Wathen & Mantler, 2022). These principles are directly relevant to information-intensive professional interaction because experiences of violence can affect concentration, trust, memory, risk perception, and readiness to act.

The analysis of the relevant scholarship demonstrates that the andragogical component of socio-legal assistance remains insufficiently conceptualised. The methods of identifying women's information and learning needs, taking account of their experience and readiness to act, structuring complex legal information, checking understanding without evaluative pressure, and supporting the transition towards independent use of available resources have not been adequately examined. Consequently, both the andragogical competence of social service centre professionals and a model for its implementation in domestic violence cases require further conceptualisation.

Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of the article is to provide a theoretical rationale for applying an andragogical approach to professional interaction between social service centre professionals and women who have experienced domestic violence and to develop a conceptual model of such interaction.

To achieve this purpose, the study addressed the following objectives: to elucidate the educational component of socio-legal assistance provided to adults; identify the principles of andragogically oriented professional interaction; substantiate the components of the conceptual model; specify the mechanisms through which social and legal information is transformed into practically applicable knowledge; and define the content and structure of professionals' andragogical competence.

The methodological framework integrates andragogical, competency-based, client-centred, participatory, and trauma-informed approaches. The andragogical approach enables consideration of adults' experience, autonomy, life tasks, and practical needs. The competency-based approach focuses the study on professionals' integrated capacity to apply knowledge, skills, professional values, and appropriate modes of action. The client-centred approach requires respect for the woman's experience, goals, and pace; the participatory approach ensures her meaningful influence on decisions; and the trauma-informed approach provides for the safe organisation of interaction with due consideration of the effects of experienced violence.

The methods employed included analysis and synthesis of scholarly sources, legislation, professional standards, and programmes; conceptual and terminological comparison; theoretical generalisation; and structural-functional and conceptual modelling. The units of analysis were the adult's status within professional interaction, the role of her experience, the process of goal setting, the manner in which information is presented, readiness to take practical action, mechanisms supporting autonomy, and criteria for effectiveness. The study is theoretical and conceptual in nature.

Results and Discussion

Applying an andragogical approach to professional interaction between social service centre professionals and women who have experienced domestic violence requires the adaptation of general principles of adult education to the specific conditions of a crisis-related life situation. This interpretation is conceptually grounded in M. Knowles's andragogical model, particularly its assumptions concerning adults' self-direction, the significance of life experience, the problem-centred orientation of learning, readiness to acquire knowledge relevant to current life tasks, and awareness of the practical value of the information received (Knowles et al., 2020). Contemporary studies conceptualise andragogy as a context-sensitive methodological framework whose principles acquire specific meaning depending on adults' life circumstances, needs, and resources (Knapke et al., 2024; Mukhalalati & Taylor, 2019).

Within socio-legal assistance, a woman's adult status is reflected in her accumulated life experience, system of values, social roles, problem-solving strategies, and knowledge of her own circumstances. At the same time, prolonged coercive control, isolation, economic restriction, intimidation, and systematic devaluation may undermine confidence in her own judgement, narrow her perception of available options, and impede independent planning. E. Stark describes coercive control as a system of practices through which the perpetrator restricts the survivor's autonomy, access to resources and social relationships, and capacity to make decisions (Stark, 2007). Under such conditions, autonomy should be regarded simultaneously as an inalienable right of an adult, a professional value of social work, and a capacity that may require gradual restoration.

A survivor's life experience has a complex structure. It includes knowledge of the perpetrator's behaviour, ways of avoiding danger, strategies for protecting children, available social relationships, and financial and material resources. At the same time, it may contain internalised beliefs concerning the need to endure violence, responsibility for the perpetrator's behaviour, the inadmissibility of disclosing family problems, or the futility of seeking institutional assistance. Previous negative encounters with the police, social services, healthcare providers, or legal professionals may further intensify distrust of formal support systems.

From an andragogical perspective, a person's experience cannot be viewed solely as a source of difficulties or misconceptions. It provides a basis for understanding the situation, identifying previously tested strategies, recognising strengths, and defining actual constraints. L. Lukianova associates the effectiveness of adult education with recognition of the learner's agency and experience, the practical orientation of content, and a partnership-based professional relationship (Lukianova, 2020). Accordingly, the professional should not dismiss the woman's previous experience but should help her distinguish between its resource-enhancing and limiting elements.

The possibility of reconsidering established assumptions is consistent with J. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning. Mezirow associated personal transformation with the critical examination of established meaning perspectives, the comparison of previous interpretations with new information, and the expansion of opportunities for informed choice (Mezirow, 2000). In work with women who have experienced domestic violence, such reflection may concern normalised beliefs about the acceptability of control, self-blame, the perceived absence of a right to assistance, or the impossibility of changing one's circumstances. This process requires particular caution: reconsideration cannot be imposed, accelerated, or undertaken without regard for the woman's readiness and safety.

The educational content of socio-legal assistance is structured around current life tasks. For one woman, the immediate priority may be understanding how to contact the police and obtain an emergency barring order; for another, it may involve access to safe accommodation, restoration of documents, social benefits, legal aid, employment, or digital protection. Andragogically oriented interaction therefore does not reproduce a predetermined educational programme. Its content depends on the nature of the request, level of risk, prior knowledge, available resources, life circumstances, and readiness to take a particular step.

This perspective is consistent with the concept of survivor-defined practice. L. Goodman and her colleagues argue that professional assistance should be organised around the woman's own goals, priorities, and life context, while ensuring her meaningful influence on decisions (Goodman et al., 2016). In the empowerment model proposed by L. Cattaneo and L. Goodman, the effectiveness of assistance is associated with a person's capacity to formulate personally meaningful goals, identify and use resources, and gain greater control over important areas of life (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015). Consequently, the andragogical component of social work should support awareness of available opportunities, understanding of the implications of different decisions, and the gradual strengthening of the woman's capacity to act.

An andragogical orientation does not alter the professional nature of social work. The professional does not assume the role of a teacher in the traditional sense, nor does the woman become a passive learner. The educational component is embedded in counselling, needs assessment, case management, legal information provision, safety planning, referral, and interagency cooperation. The professional's role is to create conditions in which information can be understood, related to the woman's specific circumstances, compared across possible courses of action, and applied in practice.

Based on the analysis undertaken, **andragogically oriented professional interaction between a social service centre professional and a woman who has experienced domestic violence** is defined as a process of socio-legal assistance organised on the principles of partnership, respect for adult experience, autonomy, safety, and practical needs, within which the professional facilitates understanding of the woman's life situation, interpretation of relevant information, assessment of possible decisions, acquisition of protection strategies, and gradual transition towards their independent application.

The theoretical analysis of andragogical principles, empowerment concepts, the participatory approach, survivor-centred practice, and trauma-informed practice provided the basis for identifying a system of interrelated principles of andragogically oriented professional interaction.

The leading principle is the **recognition of adult agency**. It entails acknowledging the woman as the holder of unique knowledge about her own circumstances, risks, the perpetrator's behaviour, her children's needs, and the acceptability of different forms of assistance. The professional possesses specialist knowledge of legislation, the social service system, legal protection mechanisms, and interagency response procedures. Professional interaction brings these two sources of knowledge together. This corresponds to the participatory logic of social work, in which the service recipient influences needs assessment, goal setting, selection of courses of action, and evaluation of outcomes (Tymchuk, 2025).

The **principle of problem- and situation-based orientation** means that the content of interaction is structured around a specific life problem. Information about a legal instrument, social service, or application procedure acquires practical significance only after its relevance to the current request, access conditions, possible limitations, and consequences has been clarified. This way of organising content is consistent with the andragogical assumption that adults are oriented towards solving life-related problems rather than acquiring an abstract body of information (Knowles et al., 2020).

Closely related to this is the **principle of practical applicability**. The outcome of socio-legal information provision should be the woman's capacity to perform a specific action: safely contact a service, formulate a request, prepare documents, use a digital service, explain her situation to a lawyer, assess risk, or revise a safety plan. The information provided should clarify the purpose and sequence of the action, required resources, possible difficulties, and available support.

The **principle of drawing on experience and facilitating its reflective reconsideration** requires the professional to identify what the woman already knows, which protection strategies she has used, which actions have been effective, which circumstances have increased the danger, and which institutions she trusts. Drawing on experience helps prevent the repetition of ineffective recommendations, identify information gaps, and activate strengths. Reflective reconsideration focuses on beliefs that restrict safe choice, while avoiding judgement, coercion, or evaluation of the woman's life decisions.

The **principle of jointly defined goals** requires the content of assistance to be aligned with the woman's personal priorities. In the empowerment model, goals formulated by the individual herself provide a foundation for evaluating professional support (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015). The professional may draw attention to risks, explain possible consequences, and suggest available resources but should not replace the woman's goals with a professional vision of the desired outcome.

The **principle of dialogue** makes information a subject of joint interpretation. Dialogue allows meanings to be clarified and misunderstandings, fears, conflicting expectations, and hidden barriers to be identified. Formal agreement or silence cannot automatically be interpreted as evidence of understanding or informed choice. Dialogue also includes the woman's right to ask questions, revisit previously discussed matters, and change her decision when new information becomes available.

The **principle of accessibility, manageable information load, and repetition** is determined by the characteristics of information processing under stress, threat, and psychological exhaustion. Complex legal terminology, excessive amounts of information, and multi-stage instructions reduce the likelihood of practical application. Information should therefore be provided in short, self-contained units, with priority given to essential content and with the use of plain language, examples, written step-by-step guidance, visual materials, and safe digital resources. Research on adult learning technologies identifies accessibility, interactivity, and a direct connection between content and practical activity as important conditions for effective learning (Vovk et al., 2020).

The **principle of safety and prevention of the reproduction of control** is of particular importance in work addressing the consequences of domestic violence. Categorical instructions, judgement, threats to withdraw assistance, concealment of alternatives, or manipulation of access to resources may reproduce the power dynamics characteristic of abusive relationships. A trauma- and violence-informed approach emphasises physical, emotional, and cultural safety, procedural predictability, choice, collaboration, and a strengths-based orientation (Wathen & Mantler, 2022). The World Health Organization likewise stresses respect for women's autonomy, confidentiality, safety, and the prevention of further harm in the provision of assistance (World Health Organization, 2013).

The system is completed by the **principle of gradual transition from supported to independent action**. At the initial stage, a woman may require a detailed explanation, a jointly made telephone call, assistance in formulating an application, support in preparing documents, or accompaniment to an institution. Over time, the elements of action that she is able to undertake are gradually transferred to her. The level of support is determined not by an abstract expectation of independence but by the level of risk, procedural complexity, emotional state, availability of resources, and readiness to take a specific step.

Based on the theoretical analysis, we developed a conceptual model of andragogically oriented professional interaction between social service centre professionals and women who have experienced domestic violence. The model comprises **value-and-goal, andragogical-diagnostic, content-related, process-and-technology, and reflective-and-outcome components**.

The model's original contribution lies in integrating the principles of adult education with the tasks of socio-legal assistance, case management, safety provision, participatory support, and restoration of women's capacity to use social and legal resources. The proposed structure does not replace existing social work technologies but elucidates the educational mechanism through which they are implemented in direct professional interaction.

The **value-and-goal component** provides the axiological foundation of the model and encompasses dignity, agency, safety, self-determination, partnership, informed participation, and the practical usefulness of assistance. These principles are consistent with empowerment theory and survivor-defined practice, in which professional support is evaluated according to the extent to which it promotes personally meaningful goals, access to resources, and greater control over one's own life (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015; Goodman et al., 2016).

The purpose of andragogically oriented interaction is to strengthen the woman's capacity to understand her situation, evaluate available options, make informed decisions, and use social and legal protection mechanisms. The quantity of information communicated cannot serve as the principal indicator of the quality of professional assistance. What matters is the extent to which the woman understands the

purpose of the available options, relates them to her own goals, resources, and risks, and is able to carry out the agreed actions.

The **andragogical-diagnostic component** involves identifying the conditions that influence the understanding and practical application of information. In O. Anishchenko's works, the ability to identify adults' educational needs, take account of their experience, organise dialogue, and evaluate interaction outcomes is regarded as a component of the andragogue's professional competence (Anishchenko, 2022). In social work, these principles require adaptation to a crisis context because women's information needs are directly connected with safety, legal status, material resources, and life decisions.

The professional identifies the woman's prior knowledge of rights, social services, and institutional procedures; previous experience of receiving assistance; information gaps; preferred forms of explanation; and linguistic, digital, cognitive, emotional, and communication barriers. It is also important to identify available resources, including supportive social relationships and access to communication tools, documents, housing, transport, financial means, and legal aid.

Readiness to undertake a specific action constitutes a separate focus of assessment. It is situational and dynamic. A woman may be ready for a confidential consultation but postpone contacting the police; she may agree to receive legal information but require time before participating in court proceedings; she may seek financial independence while being unable to relocate immediately. Generalised judgements about a woman's "readiness" or "unreadiness" for change are therefore professionally inappropriate. It is more appropriate to determine her attitude towards a specific step, the barriers involved, and the level of support required to undertake it.

Andragogical diagnosis does not take the form of knowledge testing or motivation assessment. Its tools include dialogue, open and clarifying questions, analysis of the life situation, joint formulation of the request, observation of how the woman explains possible courses of action, and reflective feedback.

The **content-related component** of the model is shaped in accordance with the needs of a particular woman and the objectives of case management. It may include recognition of the forms of domestic violence and coercive control; the rights of survivors; the functions of the police, social services, courts, and the free legal aid system; special measures for combating domestic violence; options for emergency accommodation; procedures for obtaining social benefits; restoration of documents; protection of housing and property rights; digital safety; preparation for legal proceedings; and ways of communicating with relevant institutions.

The content of professional information provision is determined by Ukrainian legislation on the prevention and counteraction of domestic violence, social services, and free legal aid, as well as by regulatory provisions governing interagency cooperation and case management (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2011, 2017, 2019; Kabinet Ministriv Ukrainy, 2018, 2026). At the same time, regulatory information must be translated into a practically applicable form.

An explanation of a legal instrument should cover its purpose, procedure for application, time limits, possible restrictions, and consequences. Information about a social service should specify where to apply, the conditions of access, required documents, the limits of the institution's authority, and available alternatives if the service is unavailable in the local community. Such structuring transforms a set of legal and social provisions into a system of comprehensible practical guidelines.

The content should also reflect the principles of interagency case management. According to the international GBVIMS guidelines, assistance to survivors of gender-based violence requires confidentiality, informed consent, respect for the survivor's choices, service coordination, and minimisation of the risk of retraumatisation (GBVIMS Steering Committee, 2017). Consequently, the exchange of information between services and referral procedures should be accompanied by a clear explanation of their purpose, process, and possible implications.

The **process-and-technology component** reflects the ways in which information is jointly interpreted and translated into practical action. The principal mechanisms include dialogic explanation, problem-based structuring of content, microlearning, analysis of life situations, modelling of possible actions, joint development of step-by-step plans, restatement of information in the woman's own words, an initial supported action, reflective feedback, and gradual transfer of responsibility.

Dialogic explanation involves relating information to the current request, clarifying meanings, comparing available options, and continuously taking the woman's responses into account. The professional does not merely communicate regulatory provisions but explores how they apply to the woman's circumstances and which issues remain unclear.

Problem-based structuring of information organises the content around a specific task, such as ensuring safety, contacting the police, obtaining legal aid, protecting documents, finding emergency

accommodation, or restoring financial capacity. This approach is consistent with the andragogical orientation towards practical problem-solving (Knowles et al., 2020).

Microlearning involves presenting information in small, self-contained units, each of which addresses one practical question and concludes with the identification of a possible action. This mechanism is particularly appropriate in situations of intense emotional distress, limited consultation time, remote communication, or the need for an immediate response.

Analysis of life situations and action modelling help prepare the woman for future interaction with institutions. Together with the professional, she may formulate a request to a service, identify questions for a lawyer, rehearse a conversation with a police officer, or verify the sequence of actions to be taken if the danger escalates.

Joint development of step-by-step plans helps organise complex procedures. Such a plan should be formulated in plain language and specify the sequence of steps, relevant contacts, required documents, safe communication channels, possible obstacles, and alternatives.

Restating information in the woman's own words is used to assess whether the professional explanation has been understood. The professional may invite the woman to describe how she understands the procedure, whom she intends to contact, and what she needs to prepare. In this case, the object of assessment is the clarity of the explanation rather than the woman's level of knowledge. This helps avoid creating an examination-like situation and makes it possible to identify ambiguities promptly.

An **initial supported action** transforms information into practical experience. It may involve jointly completing a form, preparing a list of documents, making a telephone call, drafting a written application, or establishing contact with another service. After this first action has been completed, its outcome, the difficulties encountered, and readiness for the next step are jointly reviewed.

These mechanisms are consistent with contemporary andragogical principles concerning adults' active participation, contextualisation, reliance on experience, and practical application of knowledge (Knapke et al., 2024; Vovk et al., 2020). In domestic violence cases, their use is governed by the requirements of safety, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

The **reflective-and-outcome component** involves jointly evaluating what the woman has understood, which courses of action she has mastered, what she is able to undertake independently, and in which areas she requires further support. Reflection focuses on changes in her understanding of the situation, perception of possible options, assessment of risks, use of resources, and readiness to act.

The effectiveness of andragogically oriented interaction may be assessed according to a number of indicators: understanding the content, purpose, and limits of available services; the ability to explain possible courses of action; the capacity to relate these options to personal goals, resources, and risks; the ability to formulate a request to another professional; performance of feasible actions independently or with justified support; the ability to locate, verify, and critically evaluate information; readiness to reconsider decisions when circumstances change; and a stronger sense of capacity to influence one's own situation.

These indicators are consistent with the empowerment model, in which outcomes are assessed through the interrelationship between personal goals, knowledge, access to resources, practical action, and the subjective sense of control (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015). They complement the general outcomes of socio-legal assistance, including reduced danger, access to services, protection of rights, and stabilisation of housing and material circumstances. The specific outcome of the andragogical component is the transition from passive receipt of information to its informed and safe use.

Implementation of the proposed model requires the professional capacity to recognise the educational component of socio-legal assistance and organise it in accordance with the needs of an adult. Knowledge of legislation, the service system, and interagency procedures provides an essential foundation for professional practice. The practical value of this knowledge depends on the professional's ability to relate it to the woman's life situation, request, experience, resources, and readiness to act.

In O. Anishchenko's studies, andragogical competence is associated with the ability to identify adults' educational needs, take account of their individual characteristics and experience, select appropriate technologies, organise subject-to-subject interaction, and evaluate its outcomes (Anishchenko, 2022). Adapting these propositions to social work requires consideration of legal, safety-related, trauma-informed, and interagency contexts.

We define the **andragogical competence of a social service centre professional providing socio-legal assistance to women who have experienced domestic violence** as an integrated professional capacity to identify an adult's information and learning needs, transform complex social and legal information into comprehensible and practically applicable knowledge, organise its joint interpretation on

the basis of partnership, safety, and reliance on experience, and support the gradual transition towards independent use of the acquired knowledge and courses of action.

Andragogical competence is cross-cutting in nature. Legal competence determines the accuracy and completeness of the information provided, whereas andragogical competence determines how that information is structured, explained, and jointly interpreted. Case management competence ensures the organisational continuity of assistance, while andragogical competence supports the woman's informed participation and expands her capacity to act.

The structure of andragogical competence includes **value-and-ethical, diagnostic-and-analytical, information-and-content, communication-and-facilitation, design-and-technology, trauma-informed-and-safety, and reflective-and-evaluative components.**

The **value-and-ethical component** encompasses recognition of the woman's dignity, right to self-determination, participation in decision-making, and right to revise her position. The professional should be aware of the asymmetry inherent in professional interaction: the professional possesses specialist knowledge and access to institutional resources and procedures, whereas the woman may be dependent on assistance and fear losing it. An andragogical position therefore requires avoidance of a didactic tone, judgement, manipulation of information, and use of access to services as a means of influence.

The **diagnostic-and-analytical component** is reflected in the ability to identify prior knowledge, experience, information gaps, barriers, resources, and readiness to take a specific action. The professional analyses how the woman understands her rights, which protection strategies she has already used, what her previous experience with institutions has been, and which communication channels and digital resources are available and safe.

The **information-and-content component** presupposes command of current social and legal information, the ability to distinguish essential from secondary content, differentiate established facts from possible scenarios, explain the limits of institutional authority, and refrain from making unfounded assurances. Accessibility of presentation should not result in a loss of legal accuracy.

The **communication-and-facilitation component** combines active listening, open and clarifying questions, accessible explanation, clarification of meanings, joint comparison of options, work with ambivalence, and support for reflection. A facilitative position does not imply neutrality towards violence. The professional clearly recognises its inadmissibility, explains risks and protection mechanisms, and at the same time preserves the woman's right to make decisions within the limits established by law.

The **design-and-technology component** consists in the ability to select forms of interaction appropriate to the woman's situation, goals, experience, condition, and resources. These may include short information units, written step-by-step plans, contact cards, conversation modelling, joint formulation of requests, situational analysis, preparation of document lists, supported action, and safe digital materials.

The **trauma-informed-and-safety component** encompasses an understanding of how experienced violence affects concentration, memory, trust, risk assessment, and the sense of control. The professional prevents information overload, hurried demands, repeated and unjustified retelling of traumatic events, and the use of communication channels accessible to the perpetrator. Predictable procedures and the right to ask questions, postpone a decision, or return to an explanation create conditions for informed participation (Wathen & Mantler, 2022).

The **reflective-and-evaluative component** involves analysing the clarity, usefulness, and practical application of information. The professional determines whether the woman can explain the available options, understands the possible consequences, identifies which step she is able to take, and specifies the support she requires. Professional reflection also concerns the practitioner's own position, particularly the recognition of situations in which a desire for rapid results becomes pressure, care turns into paternalism, and the intention to protect leads to appropriation of the woman's right to decide. Supervision and intervention provide a professional space for analysing such dilemmas.

Comparison of the proposed structure with the professional standards for **Social Worker, Social Work Specialist, and Social Manager** confirms its connection with normatively defined occupational functions. These standards include needs assessment, professional communication, information provision, social service planning, case management, coordination, monitoring, use of information technologies, and professional development (Natsionalne ahentstvo kvalifikatsii, 2019, 2020, 2021).

Skills related to educational interaction with adult recipients of social services are represented across different occupational functions in these standards. However, they are not systematised as a distinct professional capacity encompassing the identification of information and learning needs, consideration of life experience, adaptation of complex information, verification of understanding, and support for the

transition towards independent action. The proposed structure of andragogical competence integrates these provisions and specifies their application to socio-legal assistance for adults.

The Model Programme for Survivors provides for comprehensive support, social and psychological rehabilitation, restoration of personal resources, development of safe behaviour, and increased awareness of rights and available forms of assistance (Ministerstvo sotsialnoi polityky Ukrainy, 2021). These objectives contain an educational component because they involve understanding one's life situation, acquiring knowledge, developing patterns of behaviour, and building the capacity to use available resources. The andragogical model specifies how this content can be addressed with an adult and reduces the risk of directive implementation of the programme.

The model may be applied in social service centres, mobile teams providing social and psychological assistance, day centres, crisis rooms, shelters, and counselling services. Ukrainian studies confirm the complexity of the needs of women who have experienced domestic violence and the importance of coordinated social, psychological, legal, and organisational support (Skipalska et al., 2021; Poberezhets, 2023). O. Karpenko, Zh. Petrochko, and T. Spirina emphasise the role of civil society and charitable organisations in counselling, referral, safe accommodation, and case management (Karpenko et al., 2023).

The UNFPA project *Cities and Communities Free from Domestic Violence*, implemented during the 2024–2026 cycle, is aimed at developing municipal response systems, training service providers, and strengthening intersectoral cooperation (UNFPA Ukraine, 2024). Integrating the andragogical component into the professional preparation of personnel working in these services may improve the quality of socio-legal information provision, support survivors' informed participation, and facilitate the practical use of available resources.

Discussion of the Results

The proposed model provides a theoretical account of the educational micro-process that takes place in social counselling, legal information provision, safety planning, referral, and preparation of a woman for interaction with institutions. At the same time, its application requires acknowledgement of the limits of an andragogical interpretation of socio-legal assistance.

First, an andragogical orientation does not transform counselling into a formal learning session. It characterises a mode of professional interaction in which one-way information delivery is replaced by joint interpretation, ready-made instructions by analysis of practical options, and monitoring of compliance by support for informed action. This understanding is consistent with contemporary interpretations of andragogy as a flexible framework whose principles are adapted to a particular professional and life context (Knapke et al., 2024; Mukhalalati & Taylor, 2019).

Second, in situations of immediate danger, urgent safety intervention takes priority. At this stage, the educational component is limited to the essential explanation of what actions are being taken, for what purpose, what consequences they may have, and which choices remain available. Once the situation has been stabilised, conditions emerge for deeper reflection, development of practical skills, and gradual expansion of autonomy.

Third, an andragogical approach cannot compensate for the structural inaccessibility of services. Strengthening a woman's ability to navigate the system does not eliminate shortages of safe accommodation, transport, legal aid, financial support, or adequate institutional responses. Responsibility for the accessibility and quality of resources remains with the state, local authorities, and service providers. In this context, the advocacy function of social workers remains essential for overcoming institutional barriers and expanding access to resources (Sullivan & Goodman, 2019).

Fourth, andragogical, client-centred, participatory, survivor-defined, and trauma-informed approaches perform interconnected but distinct functions. A client-centred orientation establishes respect for the woman's experience, goals, and pace; the participatory approach ensures her meaningful influence on decisions; survivor-defined practice aligns assistance with the priorities identified by the survivor herself; the trauma-informed approach establishes conditions of physical, psychological, and communicative safety; and the andragogical approach explains the processes through which information is understood and applied in practice. Their integration provides a coherent methodological foundation for professional interaction.

The organisational conditions required for implementation of the model include training professionals in andragogy and trauma-informed practice, provision of accessible information materials, availability of an up-to-date map of social services, prompt access to legal consultation, regular supervision, sufficient time for case management, and safe means of communication.

Professional development programmes for social service centre staff should be organised according to the same andragogical principles that professionals are expected to apply in practice. Training should

draw on participants' professional experience, analysis of real cases, modelling of consultations, resolution of problem situations, examination of ethical dilemmas, and reflection on one's own communicative position. Theoretical study of andragogical principles should be combined with practical mastery of explanation techniques, assessment of understanding, joint action planning, and support for the autonomy of adult service recipients.

Conclusions

Professional interaction between social service centre professionals and women who have experienced domestic violence contains an educational component. In the course of socio-legal assistance, an adult interprets her life situation, acquires knowledge about rights and resources, masters protection strategies, learns to interact with institutions, and applies information in practical action.

The andragogical approach determines how this process is organised. Its principal orientations are adult agency, reliance on experience, problem- and situation-based focus, practical applicability, dialogue, accessibility, safety, and gradual transition from supported to independent action.

The original contributions of the study include the definition of andragogically oriented professional interaction; substantiation of its system of principles; development of a five-component conceptual model; specification of the mechanisms of dialogic explanation, microlearning, situation modelling, restatement of information in the woman's own words, and an initial supported action; and definition of professionals' andragogical competence and systematisation of its components.

Andragogical competence is cross-cutting in nature. It determines how legal, communicative, assessment-related, safety-related, and case management capacities are implemented in interaction with an adult. Its development should be incorporated into professional training, continuing education, staff development programmes, and supervisory support for social service professionals.

Prospects for Further Research

The theoretical and conceptual nature of the study indicates the need for further validation of the model. Promising directions include expert evaluation involving researchers, social service centre staff, representatives of specialised services, and women with experience of receiving assistance; development of instruments for assessing andragogical competence; design and testing of a programme for its development; identification of indicators of effective professional interaction; and empirical investigation of how different ways of explaining socio-legal information influence its understanding, practical application, and women's sense of control over their own lives.

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