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A MODEL FOR PRESERVING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF VOLUNTEER PSYCHOLOGISTS

У статті представлено скомпоновану модель збереження психічного здоров'я волонтерів-психологів. Науково-практичне узагальнення, що стало науковим підґрунтям для проектування моделі містить у собі провідні ідеї сучасної психології, здобутки із психологічної допомоги населенню, яке постраждало від військових дій в Україні, основні вектори підготовки фахівців з психології.

Розглянуто наукові підходи до аналізу психологічних аспектів волонтерської діяльності, зокрема феномени професійного вигорання та вторинної травматизації. Описано складні виклики психологічної практики волонтерів, зокрема, емоційне виснаження, деперсоналізація та посилене переживання чужої травми.

Запропоновано концептуальну модель збереження психічного здоров'я волонтерів-психологів, що спроектована через призму результатуючих та процесуальних механізмів соціально-психологічної адаптації особистості. Виокремлено структуру збереження психічного здоров'я волонтерів-психологів, що формується під впливом індивідуально-психологічних чинників (співчуття до клієнтів, ризильентності, здорового способу життя) та соціальних факторів (наявність психологічної освіти та неформальної освіти, нормування часу трудової діяльності та участі у супервізії). Зазначені структури у поєднанні з емоційно-афективним, комунікативним, пізнавальним, поведінковим, емоційно-вольовим компонентами соціально-психологічної адаптації можуть представити цілісне уявлення про психічне здоров'я волонтерів-психологів.

Також, у моделі представлена структура професійного вигорання волонтерів-психологів, що проходить через призму дезадаптації особистості з її компонентами: емоційно-афективним, комунікативним, пізнавальним, поведінковим, емоційно-вольовим. Професійне вигорання утворюється у поєднанні індивідуально-психологічних особливостей волонтерів-психологів (співпереживання, переживання травми свідка, шкідливі звички, наприклад паління) та соціальних факторів впливу на особистість (відсутність освіти, ненормований робочий день, відсутність супервізії та підтримки колег).

У статті окреслено перспективи подальших досліджень, зокрема щодо розробки ефективних програм психологічної підтримки волонтерів, а також вивчення довгострокових наслідків їхньої діяльності для професійного та особистісного розвитку.

Ключеві слова: психічне здоров'я, збереження психічного здоров'я, волонтери, психологи, професійне вигорання, соціально-психологічна адаптація, ризильентність.

The article presents a composite model of preserving the mental health of volunteer psychologists. The scientific and practical generalisation that became the scientific basis for designing the model includes the leading ideas of modern psychology, achievements in psychological assistance to the population affected by military operations in Ukraine, and the main vectors of training of psychology specialists.

Scientific approaches to analysing the psychological aspects of volunteering, including the phenomena of professional burnout and secondary traumatisation, are considered. The complex challenges of psychological practice of volunteers are described, in particular, emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and intense experience of someone else's trauma.

A conceptual model of preserving the mental health of volunteer psychologists is proposed, which is projected through the prism of the resulting and procedural mechanisms of social and psychological adaptation of the individual. The structure of preserving the mental health of volunteer psychologists, which is formed under the influence of individual psychological factors (compassion for clients, risk-taking, healthy lifestyle) and social factors (availability of psychological education and non-formal education, regulation of working hours and participation in supervision), is allocated. These structures, combined with the emotional-affective, communicative, cognitive, behavioral, emotional and volitional components of social and psychological adaptation, can present a holistic view of the mental health of volunteer psychologists.

Also, the model presents the structure of professional burnout of volunteer psychologists, which passes through the prism of personality maladjustment with its components: emotional and affective, communicative, cognitive, behavioral, emotional and volitional. Professional burnout is formed in the combination of individual psychological characteristics of volunteer psychologists (empathy, witness trauma, bad habits, such as smoking) and social factors of influence on the personality (lack of education, irregular working hours, lack of supervision and support from colleagues).

The article outlines the prospects for further research, in particular, on the development of effective psychological support programs for volunteers, as well as the study of the long-term consequences of their activities for professional and personal development.

Key words: mental health, mental health preservation, volunteers, psychologists, professional burnout, social and psychological adaptation, resilience.

Formulation of the problem. During the period of the full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine by enemy troops, it became a difficult test for the population of the country. A large number of people were affected by the consequences of the hostilities, which caused an urgent need for psychological assistance. The self-organisation of volunteer psychologists became the driving force that solved numerous new problems of psychological and mental health disorders. Volunteer psychologists worked in hospitals with wounded soldiers, provided psychological support to people who were forced to leave their homes, people with disabilities and people in need of psychological assistance.

It is worth noting that during this period, the volunteer movement gained considerable strength in many areas, with volunteers collecting aid and delivering it to the military, collecting food and clothing for people who had lost their homes, building fortifications and performing other activities.

The problem of psychological aspects of the phenomenon of volunteering has been sufficiently studied in the world psychological science, but there are a number of issues that require additional consideration, especially the place of volunteering in the professional development of specialists in socio-economic professions.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Domestic research highlights the problem of theoretical and methodological substantiation of volunteering (P. Gorinov, R. Drapushko) [3], the socio-psychological aspects of volunteering (N. Gapon, A. Hudzitska-Chupala) [2; 3], the psychological foundations of optimising volunteering in student activities of young people (A. Kolomiets, O. Palamarchuk, H. Shulga, L. Kolomiets, I. Gaba) [6].

The purpose of the article is to design a model for preserving the mental health of volunteer psychologists

Outline of the main material. Volunteer psychological assistance is a necessary component of the professional development of psychology specialists. However, the very specifics of this type of activity may contain a number of features that create risks of professional burnout. In order to prevent them, it is necessary to identify ways to prevent mental health disorders and vectors of its strengthening and development.

The concept of mental health has been studied in the scientific works of many national scholars. In particular, the mental health of families in difficult life circumstances was studied by V. Moschytska [3]. The problem of mental health of military personnel is covered in the scientific works of E. Potapchuk [8] and I. Chukhriy [12].

The mental health of student youth was studied by I. Vlasenko, O. Reva, D. Volkov, and O. Chernykh [1]. The researchers analysed the age dynamics of changes in the components of students' mental health. They also identified significant indicators of altruistic prosocial behavior in psychology students, which, on the one

hand, are peculiarities of the age period, and on the other hand, are professionally important qualities of professional development.

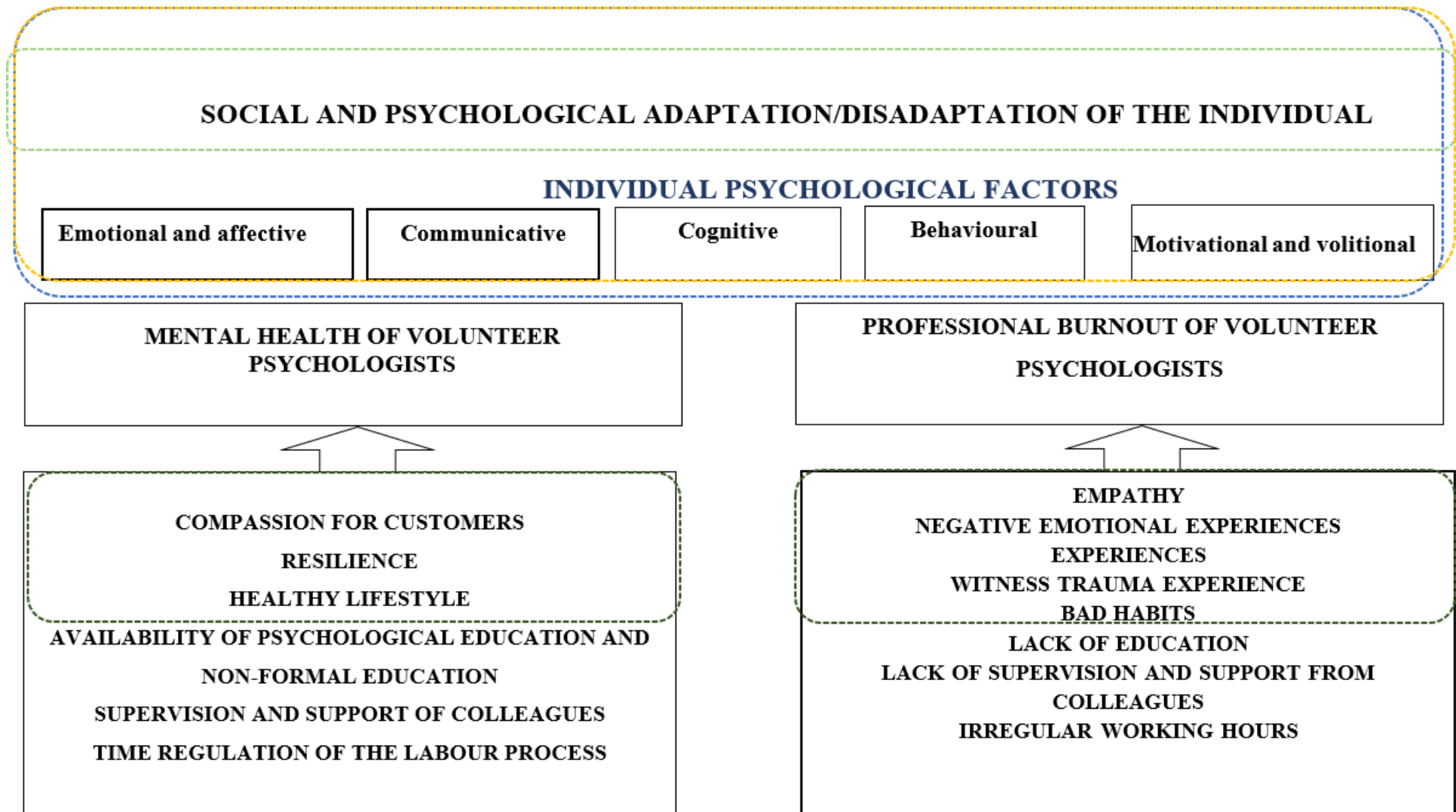


Figure 1. Model of mental health of volunteer psychologists

It is worth noting that, for example, in the training of psychology students at Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University (VSPU), volunteering is a necessary component. Students of 4-5 years of training are actively involved in peer-to-peer programs, providing psychological assistance to junior students and the population affected by military operations. Students have the opportunity to expand their professional competences during non-formal education at the International Institute for Trauma Studies at VSPU. Students are offered training courses and lectures taught by world-renowned psychotherapists, psychologists, social work specialists and trauma therapists.

Thus, volunteering is a sustainable vector of professional development for psychologists. Already in their professional life, psychologists join volunteer associations or provide assistance to those in need on their own. The need for psychologists to volunteer is especially acute in times of social upheaval, during the global pandemic and military operations in Ukraine.

To design a model for preserving the mental health of volunteer psychologists (Figure 1), it is important to identify the risks that can lead to professional staff burnout.

The model is based on the consideration of socio-psychological adaptation/disadaptation of the individual and its components - individual psychological factors: emotional and affective, communicative, cognitive, behavioral, emotional and volitional [10]. This approach was presented in the scientific works of A. Shevtsov in co-authorship with I. Chukhriy in the study of psychological mechanisms of social adaptation of the individual [10].

The mental health of volunteer psychologists, as well as their professional burnout, can be considered as consequences of the processes and results of social and psychological adaptation or maladaptation (in the case of professional burnout), and indicators of their individual psychological factors.

The risk of professional burnout arises from a number of individual psychological factors and social factors.

Individual psychological factors of professional burnout of volunteer psychologists:

Empathy for the emotional state of clients. This is the opposite quality of empathy and compassion. This is when a specialist, together with the client, experiences the entire spectrum of the client's negative experiences, feels the power of its manifestation and possible psychosomatic consequences.

The first signs of professional burnout are emotional exhaustion and the experience of negative emotional states, such as aggression, anxiety, depression, and others. L. Karamushka defines professional burnout as a long-term stressful situation that occurs against the background of chronic overstrain and leads to the depletion of emotional and energy resources of a person [5].

K. Maslach and S. Jackson [11] identified a three-component model of professional burnout syndrome: emotional exhaustion (devastation or reduction of psychological resources of the individual, difficulties in maintaining one's own psychological level), depersonalisation (formation of negative, cruel, indifferent attitudes towards people), reduction of personal achievements (tendencies to assess one's work with clients negatively, accompanied by a sense of dissatisfaction and low professional self-esteem).

Experiencing witness trauma. P. Hornostai [4] notes in her publications that secondary traumatic stress plays a special role in the spread of trauma, which is formed when a person is affected by a trauma that occurred with other people. The author calls this type of trauma an informed trauma. The term 'bystander trauma' is also used when traumatising occurs due to the perception of another trauma. Signs of witness trauma include feelings of powerlessness due to the inability to intervene and help and, as a result, shame and guilt.

Due to the inability to contain the anxiety, fear, anger of clients and their own, some professionals may resort to harmful habits such as smoking. For a while, it does seem that the feelings are suppressed, but this is only for a while, and the damage that is done has a negative impact not only on the mental but also on the physical health of the professional.

Social factors of professional burnout of volunteer psychologists:

Lack of education. Of course, the availability of education is a significant advantage in providing qualified psychological assistance and in preserving the mental health of the specialist. The problem of the competence of psychologists, especially those who provide volunteer assistance to the population affected by the military operations in Ukraine, is becoming increasingly important and arouses much interest. Professional competencies and the level of professionalism should not be neglected, but experience shows that in times of war, the first psychological assistance that is so necessary for a person in difficult life circumstances or at the site of a disaster was not always provided by psychologists, but could be provided by volunteers, citizens who were nearby and could help withstand difficult emotional experiences, support and just be there.

Irregular working hours. Structuring activities and time allocation are important in volunteering. It is advisable not to overload specialists with a large number of consultations and take breaks between them.

Lack of supervision and support from colleagues. Supervisory support is a prerequisite for the successful professional activity of psychologists. This form of work is especially necessary in cases where psychologists work with people who have suffered as a result of military operations and found themselves in difficult life circumstances.

Social factors and intrapersonal factors contribute to the preservation of the mental health of volunteer psychologists. Individual psychological factors of mental health of volunteer psychologists:

Compassion for clients. An important psychological ability of a psychologist is empathy. Empathy is defined in the psychological literature as the ability to empathise, i.e. to experience with another person his/her emotional feelings and the ability to sympathise, i.e. to understand the emotions of another person and the ability to withstand them and help and support another. That is, it is compassion that makes it possible to provide competent psychological assistance, because the specialist is not absorbed in grief or other client experiences, but understands them, withstands them, acts as a container and has the ability to provide support and other types of psychological assistance.

Resilience. In most scientific concepts, resilience is defined as a complex, multidimensional and dynamic set of individual personality traits. According to D. Alexander, resilience is the ability of an individual to maintain a relatively stable level of psychological and physical functioning in response to a potentially devastating and stressful event, such as the death of a loved one, or in a life-threatening situation [9]. Resilience is the ability of a person to experience positive emotions and learn from their own experience in difficult life conditions. It can be defined as an individual's ability to withstand and adapt to adverse traumatic events. It is the ability to adapt due to individual characteristics, and it is this ability that models and mitigates the negative effects of stress.

Healthy lifestyle. To maintain your mental health, it is important to take care of your physical health. It is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle: to avoid bad habits (smoking, drinking alcohol, etc.), to do daily physical exercises, or to take walks in the fresh air. This is a necessary resource in maintaining mental health, as it helps to reduce anxiety, prevent a number of diseases, etc.

Social factors of mental health of volunteer psychologists:

Availability of psychological education and non-formal education. It is important to note that higher education institutions annually update their educational and professional programs based on meetings with employers, the scientific community, and graduates of the speciality. In recent years, educational and professional programs in psychology have been significantly expanded with practical disciplines in line with the challenges of the modern world, including disciplines that provide practical competencies in: providing psychological assistance to persons affected by military operations, psychological support and assistance to combatants and their families, psychological assistance to internally displaced persons and persons with disabilities and other categories of persons in need of assistance.

It is important to adhere to a clear schedule of consultations, as various shifts and overloads harm not only clients but also the specialists themselves. Excessive overwork contributes to professional burnout. And changes in the work schedule may have negative consequences for the work outcome.

Supervision and support of colleagues. Supervision is one of the main methods of professional development for psychologists, which is conducted in the form of professional counselling. During supervision, psychologists can gain practical knowledge of psychological assistance to clients, receive professional support from colleagues and strengthen their practical experience.

An important achievement of participating in supervision groups is the support of colleagues, which can be an extremely powerful resource for volunteer psychologists in difficult times of war. As professionals who constantly care about people's mental health may need care themselves.

Volunteer psychologists need to take care of their own mental health, as this is the only way they can learn to take care of the mental health of the people they help.

Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research. The article presents a scientific and practical generalisation that has become the scientific basis for designing a model of mental health preservation for volunteer psychologists. This model is presented through the prism of the resultant and procedural mechanisms of social and psychological adaptation of the individual. The structure of preserving the mental health of volunteer psychologists, which is formed under the influence of individual psychological factors (compassion for clients, risk-taking, healthy lifestyle) and social factors (availability of psychological education and non-formal education, regulation of working hours and participation in supervision), is allocated. These structures, combined with the emotional-affective, communicative, cognitive, behavioral,

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This model determines the vectors for further empirical study of the problem of preserving the mental health of volunteer psychologists and developing a psychocorrectional program to prevent professional burnout.

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