



## SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF CHILDREN AND TEACHERS OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF UKRAINE IN WARTIME

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DOI: 10.37096/SHDISJ-25-1.1-0005

### Abstract

*Relevance.* In war conditions, social and psychological support of the population should become an important priority of the state policy of Ukraine in order to preserve the mental health of children and adults. The purpose of the article is to summarize the features of psychocorrectional and psychotherapeutic assistance to children and teachers of preschool educational institutions in war conditions in Ukraine.

*Methodology.* Analysis of scientific and practice-oriented psychological and pedagogical literature, comparison, systematization and generalization of scientific and practical information relevant to the topic. Generalization of the author's experience in using methods of scientific and search, psychoeducational, and scientific and pedagogical work.

*Results.* The article analyzes the psycho-emotional states of preschool children growing up during the war, summarizes the experience of socio-psychological support of such children and psychological support of their educators. Life-changing technologies and techniques for working with psycho-emotional states of preschool children in the psychotherapeutic process are presented. The features of emotionally supportive communication with children in wartime are emphasized. The content of the training for teachers of preschool educational institutions is highlighted, developed for the purpose of prevention and psychoreaction of psycho-emotional states and mental health preservation of such specialists for working with preschool children in the stressful conditions of the Ukrainian present.

*Conclusions.* Effective technologies of various areas of art therapy are presented for use in such work: play therapy, drawing therapy, fairy tale therapy, recommended children's fairy tales for psychotherapeutic work with children.

**Keywords:** socio-psychological support, preschool children, preschool teachers, art therapy technologies, training technologies.

### Relevance

The military realities of life in Ukraine act as a stressful background for children and adults. According to socio-psychological research in 2025 (Children of War. State Information Platform, September 2025), 40% of Ukrainian children feel in danger, 44% of children have signs of potential PTSD. Statistics of children of war as of May 2025: 652 children died, 2145 were injured, 2191 disappeared, 45124 children were found, 19546 were deported or forcibly displaced, 1592 were returned, 20 children suffered from sexual

violence.

In wartime conditions, socio-psychological support for the population should become an important priority of the state policy of Ukraine in order to preserve the mental health of children and adults. In this regard, the All-Ukrainian Mental Health Program "How Are You?" has been developed. Assessing the psycho-emotional and psychophysiological state of children who have experienced psycho-traumatic events in wartime conditions in Ukraine, we can conclude that the most important thing for them is socio-psychological support, receiving psycho-correctional and psychotherapeutic assistance. Ukrainian scientists and practitioners in the fields of pedagogy and psychology are engaged in the study of these issues and the development of appropriate psychotherapeutic technologies: A. Bogush, N. Bulatevych, L. Beikun, G. Bratasyuk, O. Voznesenska, T. Vasylyshyna, L. Galitsyna, Yu. Gubareva, L. Kalmykova, V. Kuzmenko, T. Kurganska, I. Lytvynova, I. Lutsenko, K. Milyutina, A. Nester, N. Opryshko, S. Povoroznyuk, S. Royz, N. Sablina, O. Skordina, O. Tararina, O. Reipolska, V. Khromets, Yu. Khmelivska and others.

The purpose of this article is to outline the specific features of psychocorrectional and psychotherapeutic interaction with children and teachers of preschool educational institutions in wartime conditions in Ukraine. Accordingly, specifying the purpose, we will reveal the tasks of our research: 1) characterize the psychoemotional states of children and teachers in wartime conditions; 2) determine the features of socio-psychological support of children and teachers of preschool educational institutions in wartime conditions; 3) describe psychotherapeutic technologies and techniques for working with psychoemotional states of children with traumatic experiences in the psychotherapeutic process; 4) highlight training technologies for psychological work with teachers of preschool educational institutions, focused on preserving their mental health in wartime.

### **Methodology**

When writing the article, an analysis of scientific and practice-oriented psychological and pedagogical literature was applied, as well as synthesis, comparison, systematization and generalization of scientific and practical information relevant to the topic. The results of the author's experience in using methods of scientific research (observation, conversation, self-assessment) and scientific and pedagogical work (training, art therapy technologies) in psychoeducational and psychotherapeutic interaction with students of the "Preschool Education" specialty and working teachers and educators were also summarized.

### **Results**

An analysis of recent publications confirms that during the war, not only adults but also children suffer, and this is reflected in their psychoemotional state. As in the case of the adult population of a warring country, anxiety, fear, psychological trauma, stress, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) SR), depression, etc. are inseparable companions of



children's experiences of war events. Researchers Royz S., Bulavinova K. and Poberezhna Yu. distinguish the following manifestations of PTSD in children: intrusive memories, which the child may not admit to adults, and at the same time avoidance of everything that reminds of the experiences; emotional tension, manifestations of aggression or, conversely, apathy, depression, emotional detachment; sleep disturbances, terrible dreams, anxiety and constant expectation of a repetition of events; impaired cognitive functions; fixation on the plot of the experience, its repetition in the game (Royz S., Bulavinova K., Poberezhna Yu., 2023).

The team of authors (Lutsenko I. and others) recommend that teachers use the technology of organizing emotionally supportive communication (TEPC) they developed in their work with children of war, which is based on the following principles: emotional and value community, humanization of the teacher's communicative guidelines, professional and speech ethics, dialogicity, development of the child's personality, consideration of individual psychological characteristics and situational psycho-emotional state in speech interaction. This technology, in particular, consists in the use by the teacher and other adults of the skills of effective listening, speech expressions of consent, encouragement, approval, positive anticipatory assessment; it involves the ability of an adult to establish productive emotional, spatial, speech and interactional contact with children; mastery of optical-kinesthetic means of communication: regulation of facial expressions (smile, expression and control of emotions), gaze ("eye to eye" and "face to face"), posture (openness, trust, readiness to communicate), gestures and touches (stroking, shaking hands, patting, hugging, kissing).

Most children who develop anxiety characteristics due to experienced psychotraumatic events have difficulty expressing their own thoughts in monologues in front of the community, in communicating with adults and peers. They face problems that seem complex to them, too difficult to overcome. As a result of psychological discomfort, many children become withdrawn, and some refuse to perform any tasks. (Lutsenko I., 2018).

Another effective psychotechnology for working with children who have survived the war is art therapy, which is based on stimulating the child's creative potential and their internal mechanisms of self-regulation. This technique meets children's needs, in particular in the manifestation of speech expression and establishing themselves as a communicative personality in the social environment. It is important to use various forms of art therapy, as they contribute to the emergence of positive emotions, help children overcome apathy and indifference to communication, promote activity and creativity, help cope with anxiety, tension, insecurity and passivity caused by psychotraumatic events. (Lutsenko I., Bogush A., Kalmykova L., Kuzmenko V., Povoroznyuk S., Reypolska O., 2018).

Image therapy - healing through visual art. Drawing as a form of expressive expression begins in early childhood. Within the framework of the psychodynamic and developmental

approach, the use of drawings in working with children provides an idea of the child's inner world, emotions and internal conflicts. By drawing, children express their ideas and perceptions of the world in which they live, as well as how they cope with experiences and the world around them (Moschini LB., 2005; Betts DJ., 2006, 2012).

Play therapy is usually based on the use of role-playing games, which have a significant impact on the development of the child's personality. During the game, choosing a certain role, each child easily turns into the chosen character. The play therapy procedure includes children performing special exercises that cover both verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as playing out various life situations. During play therapy, symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder disappear, anxious developmental traits are replaced by creative abilities, and the speech potential of preschoolers develops. (Lutsenko I., *ibid.*).

Fairy tale therapy is a universal and attractive method of working with children, especially those who have survived the war. It reveals and develops children's creative abilities, in particular, develops their speech. Fairy tale therapy activates the internal reserves and potential of the individual. During fairy tale therapy, therapy also takes place through the creation of a fairy tale atmosphere. There is always a sense of security in a fairy tale, which helps to relieve anxiety, insecurity and overcome fears caused by experienced events.

Authentic Ukrainian audio fairy tales by Honored Artist of Ukraine Ruslana Lotsman are recommended for use in fairy tale therapy for children. These fairy tales were created by the author within the framework of innovative projects: "Song Room", "Song Tale", "Song Diary", "Song Basket". Listening to the fairy tales of the Ukrainian artist R. Lotzman, you can plunge into the magical world of song and fairy tale. You can imagine yourself in a Ukrainian village, in an authentic Ukrainian hut, in the place of a mother who sings Ukrainian folk songs with their children. These songs play a psychotherapeutic and emotionally supportive effect on the child's soul in conditions of war and daily stress. The ancient power of the Ukrainian people is encoded in folk songs, which have always supported and raised the people's Spirit in the struggle for freedom and independence. Through theatrical art and song creativity, Ruslana Lotsman skillfully demonstrates fairy tale therapy in action (Lotsman R., 2022).

In conditions of martial law in Ukraine, it is important to worry not only about the mental health of children, but also about teachers, parents, support staff and other adults who interact with children daily. At the end of the theoretical review, we will present our own experience of using the above technologies in working with preschool children and adults (educators and future teachers of preschool education).

Participants in the educational process are children, parents and teachers. The psycho-emotional state of an individual teacher affects the general psychological climate in the team of colleagues and children in the educational institution, parents who trust the teacher with their child. Effective interaction of these links ensures successful educational



socialization of preschoolers, productive implementation of the tasks of their preschool education.

In our scientific and pedagogical activities for training teachers of preschool educational institutions within the framework of teaching students of the specialty A2 "Preschool Education" in the disciplines "Psychology" and "Art Technologies in Working with Children" on a regular basis, we widely use art therapeutic technologies: techniques of non-traditional visual art, coloring art therapeutic coloring pages on the topic of finding psychological support in war conditions, emotional catharsis (free visual activity on Whatman paper with colored paints to musical accompaniment), drawing on semolina (the author's version of sand therapy), voicing one's associations, thoughts, experiences, emotional states and feelings for the purpose of deeper awareness. Such practices not only have a tangible recreational effect, but also become an important part of the psychological and pedagogical experience of future preschool educators.

Another relevant experience in socio-psychological support for harmonizing the psycho-emotional state and psycho-relaxation of preschool teachers dates back to September-November 2024, when the author conducted a series of trainings for teachers of the Hello Kids preschool network in Kyiv. During the training sessions, participants sincerely shared their thoughts and emotions, experiences and desires, dreams of Peace and Victory, realized and voiced the factors of psycho-emotional burnout (war, workload, anxiety, lack of planning and control in conditions of uncertainty during the war, blackouts, dissatisfaction and claims of parents of pupils, family problems, etc.). Together we looked for resources for psychoenergetic recovery (sleep, delicious food, water, outdoor recreation, walks, support from family and friends, informal communication with colleagues and friends, music, painting, theater, dancing, sports, massage, swimming, shopping, etc.). Our psychotrainings successfully introduced breathing stabilizing, art-therapeutic and meditative techniques for the purpose of psychorelaxation. At the end, the participants were provided with contacts of free psychological home support lines. A detailed training program for teachers of ZDO is presented in the author's article (Korkh V., 2025: 55-69).

### **Conclusions**

The pages of the article analyze the psycho-emotional states of children affected by war and the features of socio-psychological support for children of war, namely: psychotherapeutic life-changing technologies and techniques for working with psycho-emotional states of children of war in the psychotherapeutic process are described; the features of organizing the technology of emotionally supportive communication with children in war conditions are characterized; examples of the use of technologies of various directions of art therapy in psychotherapeutic work with children (play therapy, fairy tale therapy, drawing therapy) are given; recommended children's fairy tales for

psychotherapeutic work with children are presented. The experience of testing a training for teachers of preschool educational institutions for the purpose of prevention and psychoreaction of psycho-emotional states and mental health preservation in stressful conditions of war is highlighted.

Conflict of interests. The author declare that she have no conflicts of interest.

Disclaimer. The author declare that her opinions and views expressed in this manuscript are not subject to the influence of any organizations.

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#### ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

Cite this article

Korkh Vera. SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF CHILDREN AND TEACHERS OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF UKRAINE IN WARTIME. 2025 Journal "Socialization and Human Development" Vol. 7. No. 1. DOI: 10.37096/SHDISJ-25-1.1-0005

Submitted September 13, 2025 / Revised October 30, 2025 / Approved November 16, 2025  
Published: November 30, 2025

DOI: 10.37096/SHDISJ-25-1.1-0005

Editor in Charge – Svitlana PASHCHENKO

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