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Case Study and Notes

EXPERIENCE OF PSYCHOPRACTICAL SUPPORT OF PROFESSIONAL RESOCIALIZATION AND POST-TRAUMATIC DEVELOPMENT OF VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS

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Abstract

Relevance. The purpose of the article is to identify the features and basic principles of creating evidence-based psychological practice of work with veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war and their family members within the framework of the “Veteran's Hut” (VH) project, focused on their successful readaptation to civilian life, professional resocialization and support for the post-traumatic development of such individuals.

Methodology. The methodology of working with veterans is based on the post-non-classical paradigm of acmeological personality development, which is focused on the post-traumatic development of such individuals in group work on the basis of subject-subject relationships between the psychologist and clients and the creation of psychopractical conditions for the rethinking by veterans and their family environment of the traumatic experience of demobilized soldiers and the emergence of new life meanings associated with their professional resocialization and personal growth.

Results. In the implementation of the author's project Veteran's Hut in work with veterans and their family members, a comprehensive approach was implemented that provides a combination of educational (master's degree in psychology) and psychopractical components of their professional resocialization. The key content of psychopractical support is practices oriented towards post-traumatic growth of project participants, namely: strengthening the Ego-potential of veterans, organizing their ecological rethinking of the traumatic experience of war events through group work and the emergence of new meanings of life associated with acquiring a new profession of psychologist, which creates conditions for positive personal transformations of all program participants. The experience of implementing the author's project Veteran's House on the basis of the Faculty of Psychology and the Center for Veteran Development of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, focused on the psychological preparation of demobilized war participants and their family members for future work with fellow soldiers, testifies to the promising orientation towards the post-non-classical methodology of practical work, in particular, the use of the principles of acmeological personality development, and also requires special attention to the resilience potential of psychologists who carry out such work.

Keywords: veterans and their family members; professional resocialization, post-traumatic growth; psychopractical support; evidence-based psychological practice; acmeological development of the personality.

Relevance

As a result of the Russian-Ukrainian war, new population groups appeared in Ukrainian society. On the one hand - "combatants" and war veterans (those who have combat and traumatic experience of actively experiencing a war event); displaced persons and "empathetic", volunteers and caring patriots of the country (those who are actively experiencing the events of the war and also have primary or secondary (mainly vicarious) traumatic experience). On the other hand, there are "peace experts" (those who are in relatively safe living conditions, have no experience of working as a military psychologist and distance themselves from the traumatic experience, enduring the war "on the heels" of their own lives). Therefore, the experience of psychological practice, "peace experts" designed for the problems of ordinary people, is not always perceived as relevant by traumatized clients with military experience.

That is why, in the modern conditions of war and post-war peace, there is an urgent need for specialized psychological work with veterans and their family members, taking into account the peculiarities of their existential experience, which is due to the presence of traumatization and post-crisis experiences in the course of understanding such experience. Working with such mental material (let's call it "veteran psychological practice") requires a person to systematically transform his personality and find new meanings in life, which becomes the key content of a psychologist's psychological practice in the work of supporting the post-traumatic growth of such clients.

The purpose of the publication is to summarize the experience of developing and approving the practice of post-traumatic development of war veterans and their family members, taking into account their psychological characteristics and identifying the main principles of organizing such practice.

Theoretical background

As is known, "evidence-based practice in psychology" - Evidence-based practice in psychology (EBPP) - should ensure the effectiveness of psychological interventions by integrating: 1) the best available research, 2) relying on one's own and collegial clinical experience gained during practice and 3) taking into account the individual characteristics of clients, including their socio-cultural characteristics, values and preferences (APA, 2006). It is also emphasized the importance of taking into account ethical guidelines and the formation of a specialist's clinical (professional-author) thinking. At the same time, excessive "scholarship" and underestimation of the value of practical experience is pointed out (Velykodna, 2025).



In psychosomatics (Adamova, 2025), the following methodological principles of practical help are considered: 1) evidence, which involves the use of only those methods whose effectiveness is confirmed by research, meta-analyses, and systematic reviews; 2) reproducibility of research results by different researchers, which ensures their scientific reliability; 3) objectivity, which involves the use of methods that must be based on objective data. Attention is also drawn to non-classical methodological principles: 4) additionality - supplementation with different approaches to the study of the same phenomenon; 5) indeterminism - avoiding rigid determinism in predicting mental processes; 6) coherence - consistency of different levels of analysis of mental phenomena. It is emphasized that non-classicism recognizes the importance of the subjective and individual experience of both the psychologist and the patient and questions the absolute objectivity of scientific knowledge. Evidence-Based Practice in psychotherapy (Evidence-Based Practice - EBP) is an approach that uses scientifically proven methods for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders. Adaptation of such practices is a mandatory process that ensures their effectiveness (Aleksina, 2025).

In terms of finding a productive experience of psychotherapeutic assistance to soldiers, veterans and victims of war disasters, the logotherapeutic approach, in particular, the logotherapeutic model (Hnatiuk, Purjo, 2025) and the direction of the logotherapeutic practice built on its basis to the search for meaning and post-traumatic growth of clients, which combines: focus on the past (emotional, cognitive, bodily processing of traumatic experience) – focus on the present (reevaluation of experience, awareness of one's own changes, acceptance of reality through strength of spirit, awareness of one's own values) - focus on the future (reconstruction of the vision of the future, search for the meaning of life, planning of goal setting in relation to one's own values, actualization of responsibility). This practice contributes to the development of the spiritual dimension and positive changes in the personality, the transformation of the traumatic experience of living through the events of the war into resistance for positive changes in the being of an individual's, and the acquisition by clients of a new meaning of existence.

The results of a study on the use of an evidence-based approach to psychological practice (EBPP) among specialists in Ukraine are also indicative. A group of scientists led by Academician Lyudmila Karamushka summarizes the results of a survey conducted in 2025 aimed at identifying potential predictors of the use of EBPP among Ukrainian psychologists, which covered cognitive and behavioral variables of specialists when working with clients (Deputatov V., Velikodna M., Lazos G., Karamushka L., Klymenko I., Pisarenko T. 2025). The main predictors of the intensity of implementation of EBPP elements were the experience of personal therapy and receiving supervision by a specialist. A weak correlation was also found between the cognitive and behavioral variables of the surveyed practicing psychologists. This emphasizes the need for an optimal combination in educational programs of training psychologists of formation together with knowledge of practical skills

and creating conditions for further work on the development of a psychologist's personality.

The peculiarities of the work of psychologists on the creation and implementation of psychological practices for working with veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war and their family members are due to the presence of significant post-crisis traumatic experience of veterans and orientation to the post-traumatic development of their personalities. An important basis for the development of such psychological practice for veterans is reliance on the public sector, active cooperation with the Ministry of Veterans Affairs and Employment Centers as active agents of social policy of Ukraine. In this context, it is also important to develop and make aware a wide range of citizens of the specifics of the attitude of the state and the population of the warring country towards the military and veterans, which are revealed in the following theses:

- the attitude of the civilian population and its individual subjects towards fellow citizens and veterans at war is a "litmus test" of the public morality of Ukrainians in war and post-war times;

- the focus on the post-traumatic growth of veterans and their family members actually creates conditions for the search and psychoeducation of such individuals who strive for self-development and positive changes in their own lives, psychological help for those who find themselves in similar difficult life circumstances, and the transformation of society as a whole. Thus, practical psychological work with veterans and their family members involves the formation of psychological readiness of demobilized participants and their family members for future work with fellow soldiers and their families. The theoretical-methodological principles underlying veteran psychological practice are based on the psychological meaning mechanism of acmeological personality development (Tkachenko O., 2021) and are formulated as follows:

- the axiological principle (establishment of the "upper bar") - involves the formation of a target value-semantic attitude towards higher values;

- acmeological principle (aspiration to change taking into account the "lower bar") - involves the aspiration to achieve a value-meaning attitude based on higher values by creating new life meanings and personality development;

- subject - deed principle (Tatenko V., 2009) - integrates the methodological settings of axiological and acmeological principles in the application to their objectification in real life, which is understood as the active acts of all participants of psychological practice according to the model of the act of consciousness transformation by V. Romanets (Romanets V., 2006). In professional reality, this manifests itself as a dynamic system of activities focused on the self-transformation of participants in the implementation of the program of approbation of the practice of psychological assistance, the result of which is the innovative personal experience of both specialists and clients;

- the principle of the realization of a person's life (acmesocialization) - indicates the peculiarities of the organization of his life path, when the act becomes a permanent



practice of transforming the personality and filling it with meaningful new formations both at the individual-personal and socio-cultural levels. Methodological guidelines for the development and implementation of psychological practice are determined by the need for veterans to understand the traumatic experience, which must be based on higher human values and requires subject-subject relations between clients and psychologists as a dialogical basis for the acmeological development of the personality (Tkachenko O., 2021). This methodical approach provides the following guidelines:

1) the dominance in the practical work of the methodology based on the teleological (causal-purpose) principle of research and the subject-subject relationship of the client and the psychologist according to the principle of "Peer-to-Peer" (or "Own -to-Own" in veteran psychological practice).

2) at the same time, it is important that the personality of the psychologist-practitioner should be at least "equal" in terms of his vitality (psychological stability) with the personality of the client (in our case, it is a demobilized military psychologist with combat experience);

3) orientation to higher values and post-traumatic development of group work participants, which involves the active use of philosophical-psychological and logotherapeutic tools in practical work;

4) an organic combination of rehabilitative and therapeutic (focused on processing traumatic experiences of war events) and developmental (focused on post-traumatic growth and personality development) directions; it is important that the "immersion" in each of these directions is clearly balanced, according to the needs of the client.

Methodology

The methodology of the work is based on the post-non-classical paradigm of scientific and psychological research, the central element of which is the principle of systemic evolutionism and the principles of acmeological development of the individual, substantiated in the author's doctoral dissertation, which are presented above (Tkachenko O. A., 2021). The practical implementation of this methodology was carried out within the framework of the development and implementation of the "Veteran's Hut" (VH) project, the main base of which is the Center for Veteran Development of Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University. The course is implemented in the course of four stages.

1) Preparation for admission to higher education institutions according to the psychological training program, which involves the selection of candidates from among veterans and members of families of military personnel with direct traumatic experience (two "waves" per year), passing the rehabilitation and development program of the 1st wave and the KNU Certificate program for preparation for the Unified Professional Entrance Test (UPET) in pedagogy and psychology (developers: Professor O. Vlasova, associate professor O. Tkachenko, associate professor M. Zhilenko).

2) The first year of study of the participants of the 1st wave in the master's degree under the educational and professional program "Psychology of Childhood and Family" (guarantor of the program, professor of the Department of Developmental Psychology of the Taras Shevchenko KNU, Olena Vlasova) and psychological practice with the participants of the 2nd wave of VH according to the principle of Peer-to-peer.

3) The second year of Master's studies of the participants of the 1st wave and their psychological practice with the participants of the VH of the following sets ("waves") as "trainee" consultants. Subsidization and defense of the master's thesis in psychology and obtaining the professional qualification Practicing psychologist (social sphere). Admission to the master's program for the 1st year of study of participants of the 2nd and 3rd waves who have successfully passed the UPET.

4) Psychological residency - post-master's degree support for entry into the profession at the workplace of veterans and their family members of the 1st wave, obtaining the state professional certificate of "veteran practical psychologist" (working title). In the future, the system of psychopractical support enters the next cycle with the prospect of self-organization and development of project graduates.

Sample. 160 demobilized military personnel and their family members were involved in the program, from which 72 participants were selected for further recreational and psycho-educational work based on the results of the interview (25 of them combatant - 25 people). From their number, 44 persons were recommended for study at institution of higher education (IHE). In 2024-2025, 27 people, including 11 combatants, are studying at KNU master's program under the "Childhood and Family Psychology" program.

Methods. During the organization and implementation of psychopractical training support for veterans, the following basic psychodiagnostic package of boundary control methods is used at each stage: Tadeshi and Calhoun's post-traumatic growth questionnaire (PTG) adapted by M. Sh. Magomed-Eminov; questionnaire of PTSD symptoms PCL-5 in adaptation of V. Bezsheyk; the projective method of unfinished sentences by J. Nutten in the adaptation of M. Sh. Magomed-Eminov (modified version); projective technique "Tree" by K. Koch; procedure of semantic and sense analysis (PSSA) (Tkachenko, 2019). Also, as a method of self-reflection in the work, the narrative research method is widely used (each participant in the course of participating in the project reflects a "personal life story" in a special notebook). The work is mainly group-based, therefore the emphasis is on active social-psychological methods and strict observance of the subject-subject relations of the psychologist and clients in practical work.

Results

Professional training of psychologists focused on veteran practice is implemented on the basis of higher psychological education. The educational-contextual model of learning provides such a form of organization of the educational project, according to which



students not only master the psychological knowledge and skills provided for by the content of the educational-professional program of the master's degree in psychology. They also receive psychopractical support (PPS) in extracurricular time, which is also used to process their traumatic experiences. The real traumatic experience of every participant is actively used in the program, as well as educational modeling of situations of existential content. All this creates the necessary conditions for "working out" the difficult experiences of the participants, the practical mastering of coping skills and empathic listening, the use of psychological knowledge provided by the master's degree program, and the acquisition of practical skills and professional competencies of psychological assistance.

A total of 160 people registered for the program during the 3 waves. The empirical research group consisted of 77 participants in the beginning and 44 participants in the end, 27 of them are continuing their studies at the KNU to gain master's degree. Control diagnostic sections were conducted at the beginning and at the end of each wave, which made it possible to reveal a certain meaningful dynamic of the program participants.

According to the results of the study of the 1st wave of the program at the stage of preparation for admission to study, projective methods turned out to be the most effective. According to the results of the semantic-meaning analysis procedure, the meaning-life dynamics of the study participants changed from "dreams of victory to a desire to make their future so that there would be peace". Most of those who managed to enter the master's program (74%) also demonstrated a significant increase in motivation to study.

During the implementation of psychopractical support, a group of the most proactive students, numbering 7 people, stood out from among the participants of the 1st wave (this is 47% of those who enrolled in master's studies). All of them expressed a desire to work with the participants of the next waves, first as members of group work on the principle of "equal to equal" or "like to like", then as trainee consultants. Each of these participants was distinguished by the peculiarities of the course of traumatic experiences (according to PTSD data), their own path of post-traumatic development (according to PTG data), personal and professional individuality (according to the results of the projective method "Tree", where the individual features of their creativity in professional activity were manifested).

The results of the semantic-sense analysis procedure for this group of participants demonstrate that during the entire stay in the project, the content of the general concentrated meaning has not fundamentally changed and is defined as - "... war for me is hope for a good future". Specific concentrated meanings have changed: from - "... as soon as I master a new profession, it will be possible to get closer to a lot of things to do", - at the beginning to - "... let's learn to help our brothers better, since peaceful people are never like this ..." - at the end of the 3rd wave. At the same time, the coefficient of coincidence (C) when comparing these semantic arrays was 0.4, in the absence of a statistically significant correlation between the parameters (($r_{\text{емп.}} = -0.07$ при $r_{0.01} = 0.76$,

$r_{0.05} = 0.63$). Therefore, the final variant of a specific concentrated meaning should be considered as a meaningful new formation, which we consider an indicator of a productive personal and professional transformation of the consciousness of such persons.

Conclusions

The presented project of psychological practice "Veteran's Hut" (VH), which is being tested at the Taras Shevchenko KNU, is focused on the post-traumatic personal and professional development of demobilized soldiers and their family members and provides psychopractical support for their rehabilitation to overcome the consequences of the traumatic experience and the professional resocialization of such persons in the direction of training to provide qualified psychological assistance to other veterans and their family members. Today, the Center for Veteran Development of the Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University continues the work of the 4th wave of VH, which recruits, conducts professional selection and pre-training and supports the master's studies of veteran students. The Faculty of Psychology conducts pilot training for veterans in the first and second year of the master's degree in the family psychologist training program, and by the end of 2025, the first graduation of such specialists with the assignment of the professional qualification Practical psychologist (social sphere) is expected.

The experience of creating and implementing psychological practice for veterans showed that, in addition to taking into account the traditional principles of building the practice of psychological support, it is extremely important to focus on the post-classical methodology in the organization of work with veterans and their family members, in particular, relying on the use of the principles of acmeological development of the personality and the formation of the personal and professional readiness of the program participants to work with a similar contingent of clients, in the formation of which they become extremely important as a professional awareness, as well as the experience of experiencing tangential events of military life, as well as the resilience of a psychologist's personality. Within the framework of this work, special attention should be paid to the individuality of the future specialist as a person and professional, which requires an individualized approach in working with veterans of the project in order to provide them with high-quality training for psychological assistance to their peers and family members.

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