



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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The Development of Resilience of Schoolchildren as a Basis for Health Care in the Conditions of Martial Law



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Dear Editor,

The problem of preserving and strengthening the health of schoolchildren became acute this year for all specialists in the field of education in connection with serious difficulties of an objective nature, which are associated with work in the conditions of a full-scale military invasion from Russia, when on the competence of specialists in the formation of resilience in children and youth depends not only the success of educational activities in particular, but also the preservation of the nation's gene pool in general.

Researchers note that for the development of resilience in an individual, it must experience adversity or threats during its own development, as there must be a past or current danger for its formation (Olsson et al., 2003), as well as the interaction between risk factors, protective factors and vulnerability factors that lead to the successful acquisition of a certain ability to recover (resilience), or maladjustment (Pakhnenko, 2022). Social capital (social resources, community effectiveness), economic development (opportunities for economic

support), human capital (knowledge, leadership) and physical community resources are among the components of ensuring community resilience.

According to Kireieva (2022, p. 6), a person's presence in situations of high level of uncertainty and, at the same time, low level of awareness and controllability prompts them to engage a wide range of adaptive capabilities, among which such personal characteristics as resilience (ability to regenerate) and optimism (positive confidence in expectations) are important, which are resources for effective adaptation to difficult/atypical life situations. It was established (Kireieva, 2022) that with age, the formation of resilience and optimism in difficult conditions requires the involvement of a greater number of predictors (reflection of past living experience and overcoming difficult life situations, awareness of new circumstances and one's state of health and transformation of behavior patterns in the difficult conditions of the present, presence of positive expectations in the future).



Formation of a children's health culture, starting from the first days of their schooling, can play an important positive role in this. This will help develop their resilience in the future (Melnyk, 2002). Characteristics important for the development of resilience include the following: stable acceptance of reality, deep, supported by strong values faith in the meaning of life, ability to improvise (Coutu, 2002); social features (developing friendships, the ability to establish positive relationships with others, possessing effective communication skills that require the appropriate use of language and finding help), emotional features (a strong sense of self-efficacy, high self-confidence, high self-esteem and self-acceptance, emotional control and awareness skills, quick ability to adapt to new situations, ability to resist anxiety and obstacles), cognitive/academic features (high achievement motivation, ability to consider and plan for the future and deal rationally with stressful and traumatic events, ability to create many more internal attributes, than external attribution) (Karatas & Cakar, 2011).

Resilience is considered (Hrishyn, 2021) as a quality of the personality that determines the possibility of resisting stress and successful adaptation afterwards due to the development of adaptation to changing life circumstances, stress resistance, psychological well-being, success in leading activities, and among the factors of resilience are determined: regulatory (ability to self-regulate, vitality, self-control, motivation for success, active coping); cognitive (optimistic attributive style, cognitive flexibility, meaningfulness of life, its focus on achieving a certain goal, developed spiritual intelligence); emotional (predominance of positive emotions, good mood, ability to regulate emotions) and socio-behavioral (effective holding in childhood, good upbringing, good relationships with adults in childhood, presence of partners and friends, presence of social support and the ability to seek support from others).

Sychynska (2022, p. 72) proves that parental support is a significant external resource that contributes to the positive development of personality in adolescence and, integrating with the psychophysiological qualities of adolescents, becomes a platform for the formation of their resilience.

Furthermore, researchers (Melnyk et al., 2022) define the development of physical and social activity as an important factor in the development of the adaptive capabilities of young people when overcoming complex social challenges today.

Researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health (Betancourt & Khan, 2008) claim that a number of protective processes contribute to sustainable mental health outcomes in children, if viewed through the lens of the child's social ecology. Restoring the disrupted social ecology is fundamental to improving preventive and rehabilitative measures for war-affected children. The researchers see the restoration of the opportunity to learn and develop vocational skills as a condition for the development of hope and tools for future success in life and emphasize that in situations of displacement for children and youth during wartime, educational programs can perform a protective function, since children are then

under more centralized supervision and there is an opportunity to create systematic mechanisms to check their mental and physical health, as well as to promote social connections between children, professionals and other adults in the community by involving beneficiaries in collective action on behalf of children. Scientists also prove that in relation to the support of children affected by war, there is evidence of the positive impact of emotionally warm relationships between children and the staff of children's institutions, which provide them with assistance for the development of resilience and mental health and protection against psychotraumatic disorders in later life.

Frounfelker et al. (2019) also emphasize the need to provide children affected by armed conflicts with basic needs, a psychologically favorable environment, opportunities for education and professional training, and other resources that contribute to their positive psychosocial development and mental health, and emphasize the importance of family involvement in the child's healing process.

As the researchers (Kravtsova & Kravtsov, 2022) note, in the conditions of war in Ukraine, the issues of preserving the life of a specific person and the vital activities of the community come to the fore, which involve the preservation of physical and mental integrity, health and social welfare of the victims, as well as communities - in the occupied territories, in the areas of hostilities and in the regions that accommodate displaced people, when the need to develop a comprehensive approach to maintaining, preserving and restoring the mental health of various strata of the population in the war and post-war period becomes urgent, when an effective system of medical and social rehabilitation, maximum socialization of the affected persons, creation of full-fledged communications, legal support, restoration and continuous improvement of the safety and comfort of the environment as a factor of physical and psychological safety should be established. The researchers single out the following health care priorities aimed at ensuring the stability and sustainability of the development of the territorial community: formation of a public space on the territory that is safe and comfortable for living; social adaptation and reintegration of combatants and internally displaced persons, especially children; psychological assistance to community members and internally displaced persons; support, full-fledged development and patriotic upbringing of children and youth.

During the introduction of martial law in Ukraine, educational and methodological support for the education process useful for the development of student youth resilience was worked out (Kornienko et al., 2022) – developed by researchers of the extracurricular education laboratory of the Institute of Educational Problems of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, an end-to-end curriculum with after-school education of the health direction “Fundamentals of life safety in combat conditions” (ensures the training of schoolchildren in the rules of preserving health and life in combat conditions by familiarizing them with the rules of behavior in the combat zone, teaching how to treat wounds and make



bandages and provide first medical aid for burns, overheating, frostbite, as well as familiarization with the simplest tests for detecting signs of life, which can be implemented in classes of all areas of extracurricular education).

According to the content of the informational and analytical collection “Education in Ukraine under martial law”, the main current priority of educational institutions is to ensure the psychological stability of participants in the educational process who suffered from Russian armed aggression (Shkarlet, 2022). According to the research of the Institute of Educational Analytics, with the beginning of the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the number of appeals to the psychological service of educational institutions regarding the psychological support of children in war conditions, the provision of psychological assistance, including emergency, overcoming stress, experiencing loss, grief, sadness and suffering, psychotherapeutic work with children who lost their parents, home, health and suffered injuries, survived the bombing, became refugees, IDPs - 446,368 appeals (Shkarlet, 2022): 54.5% appeals from children, 24.2% appeals from parents or legal representatives, 2.5% appeals from other family members, 17.2% appeals from teaching staff, 1.6% appeals from groups with limited mobility. Prevention of suicidal manifestations and inclinations among children is also an important area of activity of the psychological service – 49,777 appeals: 33.2% appeals from parents, 18.8% appeals from pedagogical workers, 31.1% appeals from schoolchildren and 16.9% appeals from other interested persons and public organizations.

Useful developments in this direction are the use of information space to create resilient environments and applications that create circles of support for subjects of the educational process (Shkarlet, 2022): educational chatbot of the Ministry of Education and Culture EducationUaBot (section “Psychological support” with provision resources and information for parents); Telegram channel “Support the child” (with placement of psychological advice and materials on psychological trauma, games, exercises, toys, audio and video materials for pedagogical workers and parents); professional development course for pedagogues “First psychological aid to participants in the educational process during and after the end of hostilities” (10 multimedia lessons in the international SCORM format, additional materials and practical trainings, during which educators learn about psychological conditions, learn to provide psychological first aid using methodological manuals of Save the Children, and also receive recommendations on the redirection of the International Standing Committee); psychological support project “PORUCH” from the Ukrainian Institute of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and the All-Ukrainian Community Center “Volunteer”; Telegram channel “Take care of yourself” (a number of materials on psychological support for adults in general and on the occurrence and impact of aggression on the human condition during war, recommendations on stabilization of emotional state and stress management in particular); on the website of the DNU “Institute for the

Modernization of the Content of Education” a page “Materials for use in work during military operations” has been created (information on the best practices of psychological and pedagogical support and support of participants in the educational process in conditions of military operations and armed conflicts, methodological recommendations “Psychological First Aid. Algorithm of actions”).

Pedagogical workers and psychologists of educational institutions are important subjects in the formation of children’s and youth’s resilience.

This imposes a great responsibility on these professionals, who need to maximize their innovative potential and pedagogical competencies (Melynk & Pypenko, 2017) in these extreme conditions.

With the support of foreign and domestic social institutions, a number of initiatives are being implemented in Ukraine for the training of pedagogical workers and psychologists with the aim of forming professional competencies to provide psychological support for children during education and providing psycho-social support (Shkarlet, 2022): conducting training and supervision of psychologists with the help of a short group intervention called “Teaching the recovery method” based on cognitive-behavioral therapy (Children and War Foundation); training of trainers from institutes of postgraduate pedagogical education according to the training programs: “Cultivating resilience skills for teachers”, “Cultivating resilience skills for students”, “Basics of psychological counseling regarding common difficulties that arise in the field of mental health in children” (Center of Health and Self Development “Family Circle”); on the adaptation and exchange of educational resources on the basics of mental health “Cycle of well-being” for teachers, parents and children (National Center for Improvement of Scotland); adaptation of four online courses on social-emotional learning, work with psychological trauma and stress for pedagogical workers (PSS/SEL) (Childhood Education International); adaptation and implementation of Child/Adolescent Mental Health Support in Education protocols and the ReachNow tool (CCDT tool) that can be used by people without specific mental health expertise to help them identify and refer children with mental health needs (War Child); regarding the implementation of the “Return to Learning” program for teaching staff, Tree App – an application for mental health support for children with built-in socio-emotional learning (Save the Children); regarding the holding of webinars for pedagogical workers (for educators and heads of preschool education institutions, specialists of inclusive resource centers) on psychological support for children (NGO “Support the child”).

The analysis of the activity of youth organizations during the martial law testified that the All-Ukrainian Youth Center carried out significant work and prepared Recommendations on the organization of space and activities of youth institutions during wartime. The recommendations provide advice, depending on the location of the youth center, on the protection of visitors to the center, the protection of the informational space



around it, what youth centers should do in the temporarily occupied territory and its activity in order to preserve and strengthen the resilience potential of its members, as well as provide examples of the activities of those successfully operating under martial law youth centers (The All-Ukrainian Youth Center, 2022).

Taking into account the results of the analysis of scientific research and practical experience on the problem of the development of resilience in children and youth, we selected important factors for the design and development of a resilient educational support space (creating a socially favorable supportive environment, involving in the process socio-pedagogical specialists, volunteers and parents of pupils, creating conditions for children and young people to develop a sense of togetherness and confidence in their own strengths, opportunities and future prospects, the formation of self-awareness and self-acceptance skills, the ability to resist anxiety and plan their own actions, the use of art therapy resources and artistic theatricalization) and its approbation was carried out during organization of social and educational influences with children and student youth in educational institutions under martial law (Kostina, 2022). The obtained results proved the effectiveness of the developed social and educational tools and the possibility of their use in the process of professional training of future specialists in the social field to work in conditions of martial law.

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