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FEATURES OF SOCIAL WORK WITH INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

У статті розглянуто специфіку соціальної роботи з внутрішньо переміщеними особами (ВПО) в умовах збройного конфлікту. Актуальність теми зумовлена масштабністю внутрішнього переміщення населення внаслідок повномасштабної війни та необхідністю забезпечення ефективної підтримки ВПО на всіх етапах адаптації. Особливої уваги потребує розробка й впровадження комплексних підходів до соціальної роботи, що охоплюють не лише матеріальну допомогу, а й соціально-психологічну підтримку, зміцнення соціальних зв'язків і розвиток стресостійкості. У сучасних умовах надзвичайно важливо створювати інклюзивні моделі інтеграції ВПО, орієнтовані на довготривалу стабілізацію як окремих осіб, так і приймаючих громад. Теоретичний аналіз дозволив нам констатувати, що соціальна робота з ВПО в Україні реалізується у класичних формах (надання державних соціальних послуг і підтримки) та неklasичних, що включають психологічну реабілітацію, адаптацію й роботу з мікросередовищем. Ефективність цих форм залежить від поєднання індивідуального підходу до особи та впливу на її соціальне оточення. У результаті соціальної діагностики виявлено, що більшість ВПО перебувають у стані дезадаптації, що свідчить про труднощі в адаптації до нових умов життя. Незважаючи на це, зафіксовано наявність внутрішніх ресурсів: прийняття себе, внутрішній контроль, емоційна стабільність. У респондентів простежується позитивне ставлення до оточення, проте зберігається певна напруга у соціальній взаємодії. Переважання внутрішнього контролю над зовнішнім свідчить про готовність брати відповідальність за власні дії. Водночас емоційний комфорт у частини опитаних поєднується з високим рівнем психологічного стресу. Значна частка респондентів (48,4%) має високий рівень стресу, що підтверджує їхню вразливість до впливу травматичних подій. Адаптація у громадах відбувається повільно - понад 60% ВПО проживають на новому місці більше року, але все ще мають труднощі із працевлаштуванням і соціальною інтеграцією. Понад половина опитаних зіштовхуються з житловими та матеріальними проблемами. Лише третина респондентів має роботу, а більшість усе ще перебуває у пошуку. Психологічне напруження, пов'язане з переміщенням, зберігається у понад 59% опитаних. Незважаючи на формальну підтримку з боку громад, рівень суб'єктивного відчуття прийняття залишається низьким. Усе це вказує на необхідність комплексної підтримки ВПО, яка має включати психологічну допомогу, доступ до освіти, працевлаштування та соціальну інтеграцію.

Ключові слова: внутрішньо переміщені особи, адаптація, соціальна робота, інтеграція, напрямки соціальної роботи.

The article examines the specifics of social work with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the context of armed conflict. The relevance of this topic stems from the massive scale of internal displacement caused by full-scale war and the need to provide effective support for IDPs at all stages of adaptation. Particular attention should be given to developing and implementing comprehensive approaches to social work that encompass not only material assistance but also psychosocial support, strengthening social ties, and fostering resilience. In current conditions, it is critically important to create inclusive models of IDP integration aimed at long-term stabilization for both individuals and receiving communities. Theoretical analysis has allowed us to conclude that social work with IDPs in Ukraine is implemented through both classical forms (provision of state social services and support) and non-classical forms, which include psychological rehabilitation, adaptation, and work with the micro-environment. The effectiveness of these

approaches depends on combining individualized support with interventions targeting the person's social surroundings. Social diagnostics revealed that most IDPs experience maladaptation, indicating difficulties in adjusting to new living conditions. Despite this, internal resources were identified, including self-acceptance, internal locus of control, and emotional stability. Respondents generally demonstrated positive attitudes toward their environment, though some tension in social interactions persists. The predominance of internal over external control suggests a readiness to take responsibility for one's actions. However, while some respondents reported emotional comfort, this coexisted with high levels of psychological stress. A significant proportion of respondents (48.4%) exhibited high stress levels, confirming their vulnerability to traumatic events. Adaptation within receiving communities progresses slowly - over 60% of IDPs have resided in their new location for more than a year yet still face employment challenges and social integration barriers. More than half of respondents struggle with housing and material difficulties. Only one-third have secured employment, while the majority remain job-seeking. Psychological strain related to displacement persists among 59% of respondents. Despite formal community support, the subjective sense of acceptance remains low. These findings underscore the necessity for comprehensive IDP support programs that incorporate psychological assistance, access to education, employment opportunities, and social integration measures.

Keywords: *internally displaced persons, adaptation, social work, integration, directions of social work.*

Introduction. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) represent one of the most vulnerable population groups in Ukraine, requiring comprehensive support from both the state and local communities. The full-scale war has forced thousands to abandon their homes and seek refuge in other regions of the country. Their adaptation and integration into new communities present extreme challenges, including finding housing, securing employment, establishing social connections, and overcoming psychological trauma caused by the loss of homes, loved ones, and familiar ways of life.

Effective social work with IDPs must address not only their basic needs but also facilitate successful social adaptation, reduce tension in receiving communities, and foster psychological resilience and integration into new environments. Given the protracted and large-scale nature of the conflict, implementing innovative approaches to social work is crucial to ensure effective IDP adaptation and promote sustainable development of receiving communities. The relevance of this topic stems from the need to develop practical adaptation models that incorporate international experience, national legislation, and Ukraine's sociocultural context.

Theoretical foundations of research. The beginning of the anti-terrorist operation in eastern Ukraine, followed by Russia's full-scale invasion of our country, created an extremely complex situation in both political and socio-economic spheres. This led to a significant increase in the number of people facing difficult life circumstances, particularly becoming refugees, internally displaced persons, or losing jobs and homes. The term "internally displaced person" became widely used in Ukraine in 2014 as a direct consequence of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine.

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons," an internally displaced person is defined as a citizen of Ukraine, foreigner, or stateless person legally residing in Ukraine with permanent residence rights who was forced to leave or abandon their place of residence due to or to avoid the negative consequences of armed conflict, temporary occupation, widespread violence, human rights violations, or natural/technogenic emergencies [4].

To be recognized as internally displaced, a person must meet the following key criteria:

1. Be a citizen of Ukraine, foreigner, or stateless person legally residing in Ukraine with permanent residence rights;
2. Be forced to leave or abandon their place of residence due to or to avoid the negative consequences of armed conflict, temporary occupation, violence, human rights violations, or emergencies [5, p. 113].

Thus, the defining characteristic of IDPs is the forced nature of displacement from their permanent residence due to threats to life or health.

Internally displaced persons require comprehensive assistance and support, including material, financial, social, and psychological aid. This population group experiences constant stress caused by forced relocation, disruption of stable lifestyles, loss of homes, relatives, friends and family members. All these factors negatively impact psychological well-being. Difficult life circumstances provoke feelings of discomfort, reduced social activity and self-esteem, increased anxiety, aggression and negative attitudes toward others.

Social work with internally displaced persons is a complex and multifaceted process aimed at ensuring their social, psychological and economic well-being. Social work for IDP adaptation involves helping them adjust to their environment and restore social functions. IDP adaptation implies integration into society through developing self-awareness and role behavior, self-control capacity, and establishing adequate connections and relationships. This represents an active process of social environment adaptation focused on maintaining and creating an optimal balance between the individual, their internal state and immediate environment in the present with future perspective [7, p. 82].

Conditionally, the following types of social work with IDPs are distinguished:

1. Practical social work involves direct engagement with individuals or groups seeking social assistance;
2. Organizational work encompasses agency operations and development of specific activity programs [1].

The main directions of social work with IDPs include social diagnostics, prevention, rehabilitation, correction, and therapy. These measures aim to ensure a holistic approach that considers personal interests, needs, and value orientations, while creating conditions that mobilize internal potential to overcome challenges. Currently, IDPs receive a wide range of services including medical, legal, administrative, and psychosocial support. The primary goal of these interventions is to facilitate IDP adaptation to new conditions and ensure their optimal functioning [3, p. 114].

Social work for IDP adaptation helps them adjust to their environment and restore social functions. IDP adaptation involves societal integration through developing self-awareness, role behavior, self-control capacity, and establishing appropriate connections and relationships. This represents an active process of social environment adaptation focused on maintaining and creating an optimal balance between the individual, their internal state, and immediate environment in both present and future contexts [7, p. 82].

Given the growing challenges of IDP integration, attention must be paid to modern tools and resources that can enhance social work. Research by A. Kolomiets, O. Palamarchuk, H. Shulha, and L. Kolomiets (2019) highlights the potential of information technologies and volunteer engagement in social work. The authors note that IT can significantly optimize communication, information dissemination, and coordination efforts, while volunteer activities form an integral part of modern social work, particularly in crisis situations. This expands support possibilities and facilitates socio-pedagogical adaptation of IDPs through more flexible and effective interaction mechanisms with receiving communities [3].

Researchers I. Grygorenko and N. Savelyeva identify the following key directions of social work with IDPs [1]:

1. Labor and professional adaptation: Focused on facilitating employment considering IDPs' qualifications and labor market needs. Vocational training and retraining play crucial roles in enhancing employability and competitiveness. Social workers assist with job searches, organize professional development trainings, and support self-employment initiatives.
2. Material assistance: Addresses overcoming financial hardships through housing provision, medical services, and legal compensation payments. Social workers help assess damages, organize psychosocial support programs, and create conditions for successful integration.
3. Harmonious relations with local communities: Aims to foster positive coexistence through IDP participation in community-building and adaptation to local traditions and behavioral norms. Mutual support groups facilitate relationship-building and integration.
4. Psychological adaptation and rehabilitation: Psychologists and mental health professionals help overcome trauma through counseling and rehabilitation programs, restoring emotional balance and supporting active adaptation.
5. Successful integration conditions: Implements diverse programs promoting social equality through individualized approaches and effective intercultural communication systems that reduce cultural barriers and create harmonious coexistence conditions.

Y. Pelissier notes that social work for IDP adaptation should be implemented through various approaches corresponding to the problems this population faces due to changes in their social and cultural environment. The main directions of social work include social, socio-psychological, socio-pedagogical, socio-legal, medico-social, socio-economic, material, socio-informational, and socio-labor dimensions. For instance, the social dimension involves various institutions, particularly the Pension Fund, and includes: conducting social consultations; social rehabilitation measures in both inpatient and outpatient settings; social diagnostics; identifying individuals requiring priority social assistance; helping IDPs obtain pensions and other payments; detecting and preventing deviant behavior among IDPs and their family members; facilitating self-help and mutual aid groups; organizing cultural and recreational activities for elderly and disabled IDPs; preventing child homelessness (including placement in orphanages and boarding schools);

addressing adult homelessness (assisting with temporary housing, dormitories, or home acquisition, as well as kindergarten and care home placements); supporting property restitution or compensation; and coordinating with governmental and civic organizations to aid IDPs [8, p. 203].

Researcher N. Mazina distinguishes two main forms of social work with IDPs: classical and non-classical (informal) forms. Classical social work involves providing all types of assistance and social services that represent standard social work technologies applicable to all citizens facing difficult life circumstances. These classical forms reflect guaranteed social support and state social services available to everyone, including IDPs. Non-traditional approaches employ specialized rehabilitation and adaptation techniques for individuals, families, or social groups. These approaches are based on psychological and technical diagnostic methods for assessing clients, their families, and their micro-social environments. Such techniques may target psychological problem-solving and support adaptation following trauma or crisis situations [6, p. 133].

The success of IDP social adaptation depends on both individual psychological characteristics and environmental factors. Therefore, professionals should adopt a comprehensive approach: working with each client to restore and enhance their adaptive potential while improving the broader micro-social environment and its specific aspects [7, p. 82].

Existing research on IDP adaptation underscores the multidimensional and complex nature of this phenomenon. Ukrainian scholars pay particular attention to various aspects of IDPs' livelihoods and integration into new territorial communities, focusing on systemic challenges and socio-psychological features of this process. Researchers such as O. Balakireva, Ye. Dubrovskaya, I. Zvereva, A. Kapska, H. Laktionova, I. Polishchuk, and D. Tkach have explored the theoretical significance of IDP issues in their works. The social dimension of this problem is examined in studies by A. Akmalova, Ye. Dubrovskaya, O. Zaleska, and others. Psychological factors affecting IDPs are addressed in works by O. Blinova, V. Panko, and colleagues. Demographers O. Zaleska and O. Zastavetska have investigated internal migration trends in Ukraine. Legal and social protection frameworks for IDPs have been analyzed by scholars including A. Bushchenko and O. Martynenko. A review of existing literature reveals that while numerous studies address IDP issues, most focus on isolated aspects. Given the complexity and urgency of this topic, more comprehensive research is needed.

The purpose of the article. The study aims to identify the characteristics of socio-psychological adaptation among internally displaced persons (IDPs) through empirical research to substantiate effective approaches to social work with this population.

Methods. To examine the socio-psychological adaptation of IDPs, we employed the Rogers-Diamond methodology, which provides a comprehensive assessment of key adaptation process components. This instrument measures: levels of self-acceptance and acceptance of others; locus of control type (internal/external); emotional state (comfort/discomfort); overall adaptation level; dominance/submission tendencies; and escapism propensity. To determine stress levels among IDPs, we used the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10). A custom-designed questionnaire helped identify specific adaptation challenges faced by IDPs.

Sample. We conducted empirical research on IDP adaptation challenges in conflict conditions at the "Social Services Center" of Tyvriv Settlement Council (5 Liali Ratushna St., Tyvriv urban-type settlement). The study sample comprised 62 IDPs receiving services at the Center during the research period, including 9 men and 53 women aged 23-60 who had resided in Kherson, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, or Sumy regions before February 24, 2022. Some participants had witnessed combat, endured constant shelling, or lived under occupation.

Results and discussion. The aggregated findings from the Rogers-Diamond methodology are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Results of the General Distribution of Socio-Psychological Adaptation Indicators Among IDPs Using the Rogers-Diamond Methodology

Socio-psychological indicator	Percentage indicator
Acceptance of Others	62%
Non-acceptance of Others	38%
Internal Locus of Control	61%
External Locus of Control	39%
Adaptation	45%
Maladaptation	55%
Non-acceptance of Self	36%

Acceptance of Self	64%
Dominance	56%
Conformity	44%
Emotional Comfort	58%
Psychological distress	42%
Presence of Escapism	34%
Absence of Escapism	66%

The adaptation indicators (45%) versus maladaptation (55%) show a predominance of the latter, indicating difficulties in adjusting to new living conditions. This is typical for IDPs who lost their homes, disruption of social ties, role changes, etc. There are signs of internal tension, dissatisfaction with the situation, and potential vulnerability to psychological distress.

On the scales of "acceptance of others" (62%) versus "rejection of others" (38%), a relatively high level of trust in the environment and readiness for interpersonal interaction was observed, which is a positive resource in the adaptation process. However, the 38% rejection rate indicates residual difficulties in interaction, possibly due to previous experiences of loss.

Empirical indicators on the scales of "self-acceptance" (64%) versus "self-rejection" (36%) point to established positive self-perception, which serves as a protective factor in stressful situations. This suggests the presence of internal resources for overcoming difficulties, despite general manifestations of maladaptation.

In behavioral control, "internal control" (61%) prevails over "external control" (39%), indicating an orientation toward personal responsibility and a tendency to seek causes of events within oneself, which may contribute to active problem-solving. At the same time, nearly 40% external control reflects some belief in external circumstances as the source of difficulties, typical of experienced traumatic events.

On the scales of "dominance" (56%) versus "submissiveness" (44%), we conclude that IDPs tend toward activity, initiative, and control over situations and others, but against a backdrop of emotional instability, this may manifest as rigidity, intolerance, or tension in communication.

Regarding the emotional state of IDPs, there is a slight predominance of "emotional comfort" (58%) over "psychological distress" (42%), indicating relative emotional stability. However, the significant level of psychological distress suggests experienced stress, anxiety, and possibly post-traumatic symptoms. This is characteristic of individuals who have lost stability and remain in a state of uncertainty.

Escapism tendencies are as follows: "presence of escapism" (34%) versus "absence of escapism" (66%), indicating that the majority does not avoid reality, which is a positive marker of mature coping. However, one-third of respondents exhibit a tendency to avoid reality, which may be a defensive reaction to excessive stress.

In summarizing the results, we can draw conclusions about the characteristics of IDP adaptation: they possess internal resources, particularly self-acceptance, acceptance of others, internal control, and mostly emotional comfort. However, maladaptation predominates, indicating psychological strain, high vulnerability to war conditions, and a need for psychosocial support.

According to the PSS-10 methodology, the largest proportion of respondents (48.4%) had high stress levels. Moderate stress levels were recorded in 29% of respondents, while low stress levels were observed in 22.6% of IDPs. These data indicate a significant impact of stress factors on the majority of respondents, highlighting the need for additional measures to reduce stress levels, such as psychological support, stress management training, and improved living conditions.

Summarizing the survey results, we found that most respondents (62.9%) have lived in the community for more than a year, meaning adaptation is still ongoing, with persisting difficulties related to housing, employment, and social integration. All respondents have official IDP status, and the majority (93.5%) feel support from the local community. However, assessments of the level of acceptance by the local community indicate certain integration problems, as only 29% of respondents consider this level high, while 45.2% consider it low.

Housing conditions and material difficulties remain relevant for 53.2% of respondents, while 53.2% face challenges in finding employment. At the same time, nearly 59.7% of respondents report persistent stress due to displacement, underscoring the need for psychological support, particularly through specialized assistance programs. The study also showed that only 30% of respondents have found employment in their new location, while 53.3% are still seeking job opportunities. This emphasizes the importance of developing social projects and programs for employment and vocational retraining for IDPs. Considering these problems, respondents indicated the need for housing provision, material support, access

to work and education, as well as psychological support. This points to the need for comprehensive measures to facilitate the adaptation process for IDPs, which should include not only social support but also vocational training and psychosocial assistance.

Thus, the obtained results highlight the importance of integrating IDPs into local communities and the need for comprehensive support encompassing both social and psychological aspects of adaptation.

Conclusions. The study results indicate that internally displaced persons demonstrate certain adaptive potential, particularly due to internal resources such as self-acceptance, acceptance of others, and internal locus of control. However, maladaptation predominates, reflecting difficulties in adjusting to new living conditions. While most respondents maintain relative emotional stability, a significant portion experiences psychological distress and elevated stress levels. Approximately one-third of individuals exhibit reality-avoidance tendencies, potentially resulting from psychological exhaustion.

The adaptation process remains slow even after prolonged residence in host communities and is further complicated by housing, employment, and social integration challenges. Although most IDPs perceive community support, the level of acceptance by local residents remains insufficient. These findings collectively underscore the need for comprehensive support measures combining social, material, and psychological assistance.

Research prospects. Future socio-psychological research should focus on examining factors influencing successful adaptation and community integration. Priority areas include analysis of psychoemotional states, stress levels, and effectiveness of psychosocial support. Establishing connections between adaptation strategies, control attitudes, and value orientations would be particularly valuable. Subsequent studies should contribute to developing comprehensive social assistance and support programs for IDPs.

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