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RETHINKING OF PROFESSIONAL MODEL OF SOCIAL WORK IN UKRAINE: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Abstract. The article is devoted to the rethinking of the tasks of social work in conditions of hostilities and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. New approaches to understanding the meaning of social protection functions and human's security are considered. The features of social service delivery to internally displaced persons and combatants are analyzed. The importance of social work at the community level in the context of national crisis realities is emphasized.

Keywords: social work, social protection, social security, empowerment, hardiness, internally displaced persons, combatants, community.

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ПЕРЕОСМИСЛЕННЯ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ МОДЕЛІ СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ РОБОТИ В УКРАЇНІ: РОЗШИРЕННЯ МОЖЛИВОСТЕЙ ГРОМАД

Анотація. Статтю присвячено переосмисленню завдань соціальної роботи в умовах воєнних дій і гуманітарної кризи в Україні. Аналізуються нові підходи до розуміння функцій соціального захисту і безпеки людини. Розглядаються особливості надання соціальних послуг внутрішньо переміщеним особам та учасникам бойових дій. Підкреслюється актуальність соціальної роботи на рівні спільноти в контексті реалій національної кризи.

Ключові слова: соціальна робота, соціальний захист, соціальна безпека, наснаження, життєстійкість, внутрішньо переміщені особи, учасники бойових дій, громада.

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ПЕРЕОСМЫСЛЕНИЕ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЙ МОДЕЛИ СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ РАБОТЫ В УКРАИНЕ: РАСШИРЕНИЕ ВОЗМОЖНОСТЕЙ ОБЩИН

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются вопросы переосмысления заданий социальной работы в условиях военных действий и гуманитарного кризиса в Украине. Анализируются новые подходы к пониманию функций социальной защиты и безопасности человека. Выделяются особенности оказания социальных услуг внутренне перемещенным лицам и участникам боевых действий. Подчеркивается актуальность социальной работы на уровне сообщества в контексте реалий национального кризиса.

Ключевые слова: социальная работа, социальная защита, социальная безопасность, эмпауермент, жизнестойкость, внутренне перемещенные лица, участники боевых действий, сообщество.

Introduction. In the conditions of complicated modern Ukrainian realities, such as the Crimea annexation, the antiterrorist operation in the south-east of the country, threat of state collapse, when social and psychological tension in society is sharply rising, the number of economic, social and psychological problems of the population is dramatically increasing and state machine needs lustration, fundamental reform and recovery - value of social work as an activity that contributes to the regulation of social relations can not be overstated. Coordinated cooperation of all social institutions, effective, professional help of social workers and psychologists and their empowerment competencies are im-

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portant factors which to a large extent affect the success in overcoming the recent challenges facing Ukrainian people.

The purpose of this publication is to identify the priority areas of social work and to determine the urgent tasks facing social workers in the current daunting situation in Ukraine. New reference points of social work should be reflected in the competency content of the professional training.

The statement of the basic material. Social protection is considered to be one of the most important social workers' functions. By "social protection" we mean creating an environment in which human existence in society acquires a certain (pre-defined) level of social, socio-economic, socio-legal and socio-psychological security. In other words, social protection aims to minimize the possible risks associated with difficulties and / or deficiencies in the social, economic, political or other areas of society functioning. It is prevention of negative life situation or alleviation of difficult circumstances, social and psychological support - that helps a person to feel relatively safe, be protected.

Security generally is considered as a state of vital interests' and needs' protection against internal and external threats. According to A.Maslow safety (together with physiological needs) is principal, dominant, basic for realization of higher level needs [3].

Human security issues in the global community were highlighted in 1990th through the activity of the United Nations [9]. Due to the current situation in Ukraine problems of security gain an exceptional significance both at the level of the state's territory and independence protection, and at the local community level as well as at the level of each individual so far as life-worlds and personal senses of people are daily deformed under the influence of distress factors of their environments (local, informational, cultural, etc.).

The issue is that the concept of security acquires more social-psychological and personality-oriented meaning. Social relations are secure if they allow any person to freely choose and implement his/her own strategy of behaviour, development, way of life without any external pressure or interference. Under such circumstances, a person develops a state of so-called "psychological safety" - "integrative characteristic of the subject, reflecting the degree of satisfaction of basic need for security which is defined by the intensity of psychological well-being / trouble-being feelings" [4, p.9]. It is important that psychological safety is largely dependent on the availability of reliable and up to date information. Therefore, researchers often use the term close by the meaning to the previous one - "information-psychological security" [5].

At the moment, we can assert with confidence that the vast majority of Ukraine's population suffers from the disruption of normal process of meeting safety as a basic need at the individual, social and national levels. Hence - increased anxiety, aggression, panic, uncertainty in the present and the future, changing and reevaluation of attitudes (towards the representatives of different social and ethnic groups), beliefs, awareness of inability to deal with some issues, powerlessness, loss of balance, etc. These negative effects can deepen, escalate according to the circumstances, stressful information received, personal problems aggravation or fear for the fate of loved ones, and, consequently, lead to the emergence of different disease states, conflicts, loss of life perspectives, crisis development.

All of the foregoing emphasizes the growing role of social protection function itself, which contributes to individual safety need meeting. Therefore, one of the urgent social workers' priorities is to create conditions for the more secure existence of people, in particular, helping them in obtaining reliable information, rapid response to social needs, psychological support and services, assistance in establishing effective communication, mediation and more.

The basis of socio-psychological support in these conditions should be social workers' commitment to empowerment and clients' hardiness [6] facilitation.

Hardiness appears when there is a need to build personal meanings and life goals under limited resources, in extreme situations. It plays the role of socio-psychological resource of the personality in the process of future planning and self-prognostication. Optimism, internality, engagement, self-effectiveness, respect and self-esteem, personal freedom - are among the important personal characteristics that contribute to the formation of hardiness. These features determine empowering attitude to difficult and crisis circumstances, enable positive experience of effective critical situations overcoming.

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An important feature of safe human existence is an availability of housing accommodation, personal space. Due to the recent dramatic events in the south and east of Ukraine, many of our fellow citizens were forced to leave their homes: people from the Crimea, who had not changed their citizenship, eastern regions residents who felt threatened by the military actions and moved to a more peaceful place. Therefore, the social workers now have rather new and tense field of work - providing services and assistance to displaced individuals, internal migrants. According to international standards such persons are called "internally displaced persons" (IDPs).

Experience in solving problems of internal migration in Ukraine has been recently associated mostly with the relocation of people from thirty-kilometer zone after the Chernobyl disaster. Currently in Ukraine the number of internally displaced persons is growing, they set out with their families, often with almost no property. Settlers are in need of housing, financial aid, often documents recovery, transfer and/or renewal of social benefits, facilitating access to their savings, employment assistance, and others. Thus quick adoption of applicable laws and normative acts to regulate social workers' activity in this field is of great importance too.

IDPs (especially children) very often need professional psychological help since they have experienced significant traumatic events, loss of relatives and friends, radical change in the social environment as well as have made difficult responsible choices such as ventured to leave earlier acquired and plunge into uncertainty. The essence of forced migrants' psychological problems on one hand is connected with safety issues, and on the other is related to the experiences of their own ethno-national, political, status or other identity. Consequently, the important feature of social work with this group of clients is a necessity of active involvement of psychologists and psychotherapists, because appropriate social services must go together with professional psychological help and support.

Therefore, important tasks within this field of social work is to update the scientific understanding of the social and socio-psychological characteristics of displaced persons, determine their social and legal status, reconsider social services and their content, and search for new, effective forms and methods of work.

Another problem which can not be ignored by social work institutions responding to the current challenges is the significant increase in the number of the participants in military anti-terrorist operations in eastern Ukraine. Until recently this category of social work clients included mostly veterans of the Second World War (the number of which became less and less each year), as well as the participants of local military conflicts in other countries. Some of the social and socio-medical services together with financial benefits or facilities were proposed to veterans within the social security system. Moreover, the amount of spending on these budget articles was constantly declining.

Today, when a partial mobilization is declared and hostilities are ongoing, the number of military operations participants is constantly increasing. In this respect it is worth remembering that in addition to social and socio-medical problems of combatants acute psychological problems associated with the possible post-traumatic stress disorder typically occur, which usually cause difficulties in adaptation and rehabilitation, reintegration into society etc. It is known that abnormalities of those gone through combat experience affect all the levels of human existence - physiological, personal, interactive, social, and can lead to persistent personality changes not only in those who survived this stress, but also in their relatives. In this regard, forming of specific family relations, special life scenarios, moods and attitudes are in the centre of psychologists' attention.

Another challenge for modern social work is the fact that "new" Ukrainian problems unfold against the background of a deep systemic crisis, limited financial resources (which is why there is a massive reduction of specialists in social work throughout Ukraine) and at the same time an acute desire for social change and innovation, without which democratic future is not possible. Thus there is a request on qualitatively new social practices which in light of limited resources would effectively contribute to solving both individual problems and providing social self-reproduction and modernization through innovation. This is the work with the society at the community level, which includes: promoting local development, providing social services in the community, working with various groups in the local community, supporting social movements and initiatives to mobilize resources (social, psychological, material) and empowerment.

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Back in the 1970s French sociologist M. Crozier offers achieving social change through "careful training strategy" of individuals' new behaviours and new models of cooperation in the social space. He made focus on the human aspects of social development, emphasizing the key role of the various human communities in achieving any social innovation [1]. Later "liberation" plan of oppressed people through education appears in works of Brazilian humanitarian and educator Freire, with whose works origin of theoretical empowerment concept is associated [7].

The basis of empowerment concept is a combination of power and ability to influence the course of events. An important condition for empowerment is a community social capital existence - "collective resource of public participation, communication networks, norms of reciprocity and organization that promote trust among participants and actions to improve the common welfare" [3].

In particular, the Belgian expert Jeff Peters notes that ecosocial practice of social work aims achieving the desired social change in modern society. Its components are: 1) promoting awareness of people/community of their own capabilities and strengths; 2) strengthening the social and cultural capital; 3) achieving community / group resilience; 4) empowerment, awareness of self-influence and self-efficacy as an important social change [8].

The authors of this publication share conclusions of Ukrainian scientists (V. Vasyutynskyy, E. Golovakha, I. Meyzhys, L. Naydonova, Yu. Tatenko, Yu. Shvalb) concerning the necessity of promoting various community practices of social mobilization, social engineering, the development of social capital in order to increase the level of interpersonal trust and confidence in social institutions, promote public participation, citizen interaction and joint activities to solve local problems. All of the above enable recovery, unity and cohesion of modern Ukrainian society that is still suffering from the consequences of totalitarianism.

Therefore, we consider local community as the socio-psychological reality, field practice, which makes possible to influence the way of promoting social change in Ukraine, new social structures construction. Social work in Ukraine is mainly represented at working with individuals, groups and families. Now it is receiving another important vector of development - introduction to the process of resilient communities' development - "the mission of the social worker should be extended to issues of community integration and development covering the whole space of changes" [3, p. 238].

According to our observations, the results of which are consonant with the findings of L. Naydonova [3], social workers in Ukraine are not competent enough to work at the level of local community. Thus, there is the problem of social workers' professional readiness forming to influence at the community level.

In particular, the effective use of the mutual aid possibilities, mobilization of local resources (human, social, physical, etc.), coordination of the various branches of government, individuals' and institutions' efforts, moderation in conflicts, support and implementation of social projects - not full list of problems facing today's professionals in social work in the context of community-based approach. It opens important perspectives for research and practice.

Therefore, in the language of educational qualification and professional standards, commitment to social work at the community level, effective assistance in dealing with the new "atypical" for Ukrainian society problems, creating safe social environment involves the mastery of social work specialists in the following critical competencies: a systematic worldview and ability to mastering difficult situations; ability to work with incomplete and complex information, to deal with the conflict of objectives; competence of reflection regarding individual and cultural models, community space; competence of participation (involvement); ability to establish relations of cooperation; ability to plan and implement innovative projects; competence of tolerance to uncertainty and frustration.

Conclusions. The history of many countries testifies a significant role of social work and social services in addressing various problems and difficulties. National system of social work must demonstrate its ability to be useful to society in those difficult times, which Ukraine is experiencing.

Technologies of social project management and social mobilization used in social work professional activities need social-psychological content based on national cultural and political context. Developing of social-psychological maintenance for community work in Ukraine is an important scientific problem and a perspective of modern applied social psychology.

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Therefore social work competencies development (in a given direction) should lead to the rethinking of the national professional model of social work content, saturation it with innovative approaches, concepts, technologies. Its development is a prospect task for the respective researchers and practitioners.

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