

**PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES
OF EXPERIENCING COLLECTIVE TRAUMA
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE POPULATION OF THE IVANO-FRANKIVSK
REGION)**

The full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war has brought to the fore the issue of mental health in society, as any military action is not limited to physical destruction but also causes deep psychological trauma.

At the same time, the war has also brought to the surface the issue of collective trauma. The events that have been unfolding in Ukraine since the fall of 2013 are Ukraine's latest systemic collective trauma, and the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation on February 24, 2022, marked its peak [3, p. 162]. Collective trauma is a traumatic psychological experience shared by entire groups of people that deeply affects each member of the group, thus becoming part of their cultural identity. Typically, it can occur even in people who were not directly involved in the event. Psychological trauma is experienced by witnesses, victims of war, and those who help the victims (doctors, volunteers, emergency workers). The most common manifestations of collective trauma among Ukrainians are anxiety, depression, phobias, and various fears. Addictions, particularly to alcohol, are increasing significantly. Psychotic disorders and a number of psychosomatic disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are consistently observed [5].

In May 2025, the author of the article conducted a survey among adult residents of the Ivano-Frankivsk region. The study, which was conducted through a Google form, involved 101 respondents. The vast majority of respondents were aged 20–40, with women outnumbering men (64,4%). The purpose of the survey was to comprehensively assess and conduct an in-depth analysis of negative psycho-emotional states (anxiety, depression, traumatic stress) and trauma-related cognitive processes among the adult population of the Ivano-Frankivsk region (as a rear region) in the context of the current Russian-Ukrainian war, as well as to identify resources for overcoming traumatic experiences.

The results show that 88,1% of respondents have relatives or friends who fought or continue to fight in the Russian-Ukrainian war, with 44,6% of the total sample having five or more relatives or friends involved in combat operations; 68,3% of respondents had a relative or friend who was hospitalized or died as a result of war injuries; 8% of respondents lost a relative due to the war, 15,8% lost a close friend, and 14,9% lost another close person. In other words, virtually one in three (38,6%) lost someone close to them as a result of the fighting.

To measure anxiety in the sample, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) questionnaire was used, which is designed to assess anxiety symptoms in a person over the past two weeks. According to the GAD-7, 19,8% (20) of respondents had no symptoms of anxiety, 50,5% (51) showed mild symptoms, 18,8% (19) showed moderate symptoms, and 10,9% (11) showed clinically significant symptoms. Studying anxiety levels is important for researching collective trauma in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, as it is war that creates extreme conditions that greatly increase stress and anxiety levels in the population.

Depression is another big issue caused by the current Russian-Ukrainian war. Not being able to keep their families safe, hearing about new tragedies in the news all the time, and not seeing any hope for things getting better anytime soon makes some people feel really isolated

and hopeless. According to the PHQ-9 methodology, 19,8% (20) of respondents have no depression or minimal symptoms, 35,7% (36) have mild depression, 23,8% (24) have moderate depression, 17,8% (18) have moderate depression, and 2,9% (3) have severe depression.

Almost every second respondent is dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their sleep patterns. Unfortunately, there is a lack of research in Ukraine describing sleep disorders in civilians during wartime and their connection to anxiety and depression. The few studies conducted in Ukraine show that two-thirds of Ukrainians suffer from sleep disorders of varying intensity [4, p. 1].

In the context of healing from the collective trauma of the Russian-Ukrainian war, it is important to establish a tribunal for crimes committed by the Russian Federation during its military aggression in Ukraine [2, pp. 45-46]. Psychiatrist and collective trauma expert O. Chaban believes that if the current war is not brought to a logical conclusion, and therefore there is no new Nuremberg trial and punishment of criminals, there will be no sense of victory for justice, and then «the war will end physically, but not in people's minds». In fact, this will be a continuation of collective trauma, which is likely to contribute to an increase in cardiovascular diseases and oncological pathologies among Ukrainians [1].

Thus, the study demonstrates a high degree of indirect but deep involvement in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Despite living in a relatively safe region, a significant percentage of respondents have suffered losses due to the war. These losses underscore the profound and irreversible impact of the war on the psycho-emotional state of the sample, as loss is a powerful traumatic factor. The survey results also record significant changes in worldview and cognitive processes, reflecting a violation of the basic sense of security and trust. However, it is important to remember that in any trauma there are resources for post-traumatic growth.

Literature

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