

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE TO ADOLESCENT REFUGEES IN THE
PROCESS OF ADAPTATION TO THE NEW SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

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Abstract

The scientific work is devoted to the analysis and research of psychological assistance to refugee teenagers in the context of their adaptation to a new social environment. The main problems faced by young refugees and effective psychological support strategies aimed at facilitating their adaptation process and improving their mental well-being.

Keywords: *refugees, adolescents, psychological assistance, adaptation, new social environment, adaptation problems, mental well-being, social adaptation, intercultural communication, stress, psychosocial support.*

1. Formulation of the problem

Individual socialization is defined as a complex and multifaceted process of an individual interaction with various social agents and the environment. Focusing on adolescent refugees, this process becomes crucial in light of their external displacement and the migration impact on their social environment. The adolescents unique feature is their fragile containment of feelings inside, which can cause various changes in behaviour and the emergence of emotions

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that require adequate support. Expressed feelings such as insecurity, fear, anger, aggression, shame, guilt, alienation and isolation require attention and care to be expressed and overcome. Adolescents may face difficulties in communicating with family and show a preference for interacting with others, seeking support to overcome inner fears. Unstable conditions of migration, stressful situations and the impact of external displacement from the war create a favourable environment for aggressiveness and anxiety development among internally displaced persons. Realising these aspects in the migrant's context allows us to determine the specifics of their adaptation and explore ways to improve their psychological well-being. Aggressive behaviour among internally displaced persons may arise as a result of migration-related stresses, such as uncertainty about the future or loss of native language and cultural environment.

In the modern world, many refugee teenagers face significant difficulties in adapting to a new social environment. Insufficient psychological support and understanding their situation peculiarities can lead to serious problems in the adaptation process. We will analyse the key aspects of this issue, in particular identify the main challenges faced by young refugees and consider the role of psychological support in overcoming these difficulties to ensure their successful social adaptation.

2. Analysis of research and publications in which the solution to this problem has been initiated

Adolescence is undoubtedly a period of special challenges and transformations that require attention and thorough study. The history of psychology is saturated with the outstanding scientists works, such as S. Hall, E. Spranger, V. Stern, E. Erikson, J. Piaget, L.S. Vygotskyi, L.I. Bozhovych, D.B. Elkonin, D.I. Feldstein, who made an invaluable contribution to the psychological science development and identified the adolescence peculiarities. Recent studies in the field of refugee adolescents' psychosocial integration, who show difficulties in the process of adaptation to a new environment, draw attention to the importance in support from different social agents, such as school, community and family.

We can note an important paper concerned with psychological problems of child and adolescent refugees (Lustig et al, 2004). The mental health of refugee childrens is studied in (Browne, 2021, Fazel, 2002). In (Miller and Rasmussen, 2010) influence of the war to mental

health is investigated. Interesting review of refugees problems is given in one of the latest researches (Wenzel et al, 2022).

Research in the field of psychological assistance to refugee adolescents and their adaptation focuses on various aspects, in particular, on individualized approaches and the use of new technologies. The research, conducted by a team of psychologists led by Professor Maria García-Baamonde Sánchez (Moreno-Manso et al, 2017) examines in detail the individual stories of teenagers fleeing war and develops approaches to psychological rehabilitation that take into account their unique needs and experiences. Taking into account the results of these studies can be an important stage in the programs and practices development of psychological assistance for refugee adolescents who face the challenges of adapting to new social conditions. These studies expand our understanding of the refugee adolescent's adaptation process and indicate the importance in coordinating the efforts of different social agents in their support.

3. The purpose of the article is theoretical substantiation and empirical study of the peculiarities in socialization of the refugee teenagers. The main focus of the study is aimed at revealing effective strategies of psychological assistance focused on overcoming the adaptation difficulties in the new social environment.

4. Presentation of the main research material

Refugee adolescents face various psychological difficulties during adaptation to a new social environment. The main aspects include emotional stress caused by the change of environment and loss of usual life, they may feel insecurity, fear of the future uncertainty. Changing the cultural environment becomes a difficult task for refugee teenagers. They may feel alienated and isolated in a new environment, face challenges related to learning a new language and communicating it, this may affect their self-esteem and social interaction.

Research on emotional state, stressors, and other aspects is important for understanding and improving the mental resilience within adolescent refugees. Providing support and developing effective adaptation strategies can help them successfully integrate into a new social environment.

The main activity for teenagers is attending school, and problems with integration in a new environment directly affect social formation and adaptation at school. Such children often

encounter bullying, which can seriously affect their psychological state and educational process. Results of a focus group study within 72 refugee adolescents indicated that 23 participants who were not familiar with the topic of bullying had witnessed bullying events. Additionally, 15 people identified themselves as bullying incidents observers, 9 identified themselves as aggressors, and 25 identified themselves as victims. The study was also able to identify the main factors with the help of which bullying begins, revealing the mechanisms and context of this negative phenomenon in the school environment.

Adolescents who have survived refugees face stereotypes and misunderstanding on the part of their peers in a new environment, this creates isolation and discrimination, complicating the socialization process. Not being able to communicate effectively in the language of a new environment can become an obstacle to interacting with peers and belonging to a new environment. Biased attitudes towards language characteristics can cause conflicts and make adaptation difficult, refugee teenagers who have experienced traumatic events and losses in their own country experience psychological stress, which makes them more vulnerable to bullying and emotional difficulties. This stress can affect their behaviour, making them targets for hostile statements and conflicts, and depending on individual characteristics, such vulnerable behaviour can, on the contrary, affect the manifestation of aggression and become a protective mechanism through which the teenager expresses his/her emotions in a not entirely ecological way and thus becomes an aggressor in a new environment.

Focusing on these data, it is possible to identify key aspects affecting the adaptation of refugee teenagers to a new social environment. To overcome these problems, the following strategies are recommended that can not only attract adolescents, but also gain trust that will help them in the future.

1. Individualized approach in psychological consultations: Each refugee adolescent has his/her own unique experience and feelings, so it is important to consider this individuality when developing psychological strategies. Personal counselling and tailored approaches can help to understand and resolve the emotional challenges faced by adolescents. It is important to show the teenager that this is an opportunity to talk to someone who understands, does not judge and can help to comprehend and cope with difficult thoughts. It is like meeting a friend in a desperate situation.

2. Culturally sensitive approaches: Developing culturally sensitive approaches is another important component. Cultural awareness and respect for diversity can facilitate the adaptation

process. Support based on understanding and acknowledging cultural characteristics can help to create trust and reveal the adolescent's inner world. Psychologists and psychotherapists must consider cultural contexts for more successful mutual understanding. The main goal is to preserve one's own identity and realize that people are different from each other, and this is completely normal. Changing the usual surroundings and moving to another country against one's own will is an important stage in everyone's life. It is important to consider that the loss of a familiar environment causes internal tension and insecurity. However, embracing this change and helping the adolescent to appreciate the opportunities that the new environment can provide, can increase their confidence and willingness to explore new things. Using this approach, a teenager gets the opportunity to respond positively to changes and turn them into a personal growth chance. The awareness that the surrounding people are different allows not only to adapt to the new environment, but also to actively interact with it, without losing one's own uniqueness. This approach incorporates the positive aspects of the familiar environment loss and helps the teenager not only to avoid protests, but also to develop new social and cultural skills. More confidence and the desire to explore new things become the basis for successful adaptation and positive perception in the new environment.

3. Family support: Family support becomes especially important in the refugee context, as it takes into account not only the emotional state of the adolescent, but also the behaviour and experiences of his/her parents or guardians. This becomes a key factor, as family relationships can affect the social adaptation of an adolescent in a new environment. One of the difficulties is that teenagers often broadcast negative attitudes towards the environment, which may be due to what they receive at home. Withdrawal and withholding of emotions may stem from a desire not to burden their parents or caregivers who are already experiencing emotional difficulties. Paying attention to family relationships can have a positive impact on adaptation. It is important to understand that being a refugee is a shared problem and trying to talk and express your feelings can be a constructive step. It is also important to consider that the loss of normal society and stability can create a feeling of insecurity, but the family can become a support and a driving force forward. The ability to understand each other and overcome difficulties together opens the way to improve the adaptation of the whole family. The shared refugee experience creates an opportunity to strengthen bonds and move forward with confidence in each other's support.

4. Group Support: Group support is an important element for the psychological well-being of refugee adolescents who face adaptation difficulties in a new environment. This approach not only allows them to feel the support from the community, but also creates an opportunity for mutual understanding and joint difficulties overcoming. Group support can be particularly effective, by meeting others who are experiencing similar difficulties, the teenager finds support and understanding. In this environment, they can freely share their feelings and experiences, receive advice and support from those who have gone through a similar path. Group support can be diverse, covering different formats. It may include therapy groups where psychologists work with participants to develop coping strategies, art therapy that provides opportunities for emotional expression and creativity, or book clubs that stimulate intellectual development and foster interaction. Such a group approach may also involve working with different entities such as government agencies, community organizations and schools. The common direction of an integrated approach development creates comfortable conditions for psychological support and helps to deal with fears and insecurities due to movement and a new socio-cultural environment.

5. Use of technology: The use of technology in the field of psychological support for refugee adolescents opens up new possibilities for providing effective and affordable care, especially in remote and limited settings. Virtual platforms and online therapies are becoming an important tool, facilitating the psychological support acquisition at a distance. One of the advantages in using technology in the provision of psychological assistance is the possibility of maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. This allows teenagers to feel more comfortable and freer to express their emotions and thoughts without fear of judgment. It is also important to be able to interact with various online resources, such as lectures, trainings, and other educational materials that help ease and understand the new environment. With the help of these resources, adolescents can build adaptation strategies and find motivation for development in a new sociocultural environment. This approach opens up wide opportunities for each teenager to be able to individually choose and use the tools that best correspond his/her needs and comfort.

6. Friendship and mutual support: Friendship and mutual support are necessary components for the successful adaptation of refugee adolescents to a new socio-cultural environment. Meeting people who are willing to understand and support you can greatly relieve the adjustment period. It is important to realize that not everyone has to become best friends.

But having different acquaintances with whom you can discuss and interact expands not only the number of connections, but also the outlook. This approach allows teenagers to feel more confident in their new environment. Interaction with different people can be a source of various thoughts, ideas and perspectives, which helps to expand the worldview and enrich the experience of adaptation. Also, it contributes to the establishment of new social ties, which is an important factor of formation in a new environment.

5. Conclusions

Therefore, psychological support for refugee adolescents is an integral part of their socio-cultural adaptation process, aimed at building bridges to emotional health and integration into a new environment. This process is not limited to a set of activities; it is the creation of a system that helps them to reveal their potential and successfully interact in a new environment. Key elements of this system are a variety of strategies aimed at increasing social skills, coping with stress and promoting interaction. A comprehensive approach includes educational and sociocultural programs, psychological counselling, group support, family and friendship influence, as well as the use of technology. This support becomes an important tool in solving the problems of refugee adolescents' adaptation, providing them with the necessary resources and strategies for successful adjustment in a new socio-cultural environment. By implementing actions aimed at improving adaptation, this system contributes to the creation of a supportive environment for refugee adolescents, helping them to feel confident and integrated in the new reality.

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