

Psychosocial problems and resilience strategies of children and youth who are living in the front line zone in the East of Ukraine

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This paper presents one of the first systematic investigations of the psychosocial problems of children and youth who are living in the buffer zone in East Ukraine. We describe life conditions of children and their families, as well as the impact of the ongoing war conflict on psychosocial wellbeing of children. This paper systematically investigates resilience strategies that allow Ukrainian children to grow up well in adverse situations. A combination of structured interviews with 67 children, 30 key experts, and four focus groups with children, parents and psychosocial service providers were conducted. Results provide an in-depth understanding of psychosocial problems of children that could become a platform for planning further psychosocial interventions, as well as for conceptualizing a culturally specific resilience construct. The results of the interviews are presented for three age groups: 9-11 years old, 12-14 years old,

and 15-17 years old. The most frequent problems mentioned by the children in each age group were identified. Two problems categories common for all three groups were found: quarrels in the families and fear of war. The main characteristics of children that help those to grow up well in adverse situations were found to be optimism, happiness, and the ability to help others. The most effective ways to overcome sadness and stress were reported to be conversation with others and support provided by the families. This contextualized understanding of key resilience components will be compared to other resilience constructs in the literature, with an emphasis on the role of others in the child`s environment.

Reference:

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