

Stages of designing a bilingual online course for psychologists involved in helping the civilian population affected by war

The war caused a lot of sorrow and hardship for the civilians of Ukraine, disrupted the normal peaceful life of millions of families who lost their relatives and loved ones, homes, and had to urgently relocate to other regions of or even other countries, where they had to start over without knowing what the future holds. This burden has largely fallen on specialists, psychologists especially. The potential number of psychological requests is so great that it is necessary to update the competencies of the appropriate number of psychologists and other involved specialists. For the convenience, speed, and wider coverage of the training of such specialists, we suggest creating a bilingual online course (in English and Ukrainian, with further possibility of expansion to multilingual). Such a course will help to update the necessary knowledge and competencies of specialists who help now and will help for a long time the civilians affected by the war in Ukraine both inside the country and abroad. The course aims to enhance the professional competence and psychological well-being of psychologists, as well as to promote the development of a supportive online community. The online course will also be useful for professionals who will provide psychological assistance to civilians from other countries, given the increasing number of military conflicts and wars.

To develop this online course, we offer the following stages:

Stage 1 Theoretical and methodological: analysis of existing experience. A theoretical and methodological analysis of the world experience in the development and support of online courses on the problem of training psychologists who help civilians affected by war. Familiarization with the best practices of organizing a support environment within the online course. Analysis of modern platforms for online courses (LMS) and choosing the most optimal one for our purpose.

Stage 2 Empirical: research and development. Design and approval of the online course concept, structure, and content. Design of the feedback form. Determining the form of psychological supervision for online course participants. Verification of the online course project to compliance & ethics policy and procedures. Adaptation of training content and methods to the Ukrainian psychologists and civilians, if required. Setting up the chosen Learning Management System and placement of the online course on it. Instruction and training of the personnel. Designing and organizing a bilingual supportive environment for online course participants (Discord channel or group on Facebook and within the online course, if it possible by LMS). Selection and development of psychological support methods for online course participants. Implementation of the chosen form of supervision for online course participants. Carrying out its pilot testing and gathering feedback. Optional: defining the design of an empirical study using digital technologies (online survey within the online course) on the stress level expectation of psychologists during future psychology consulting, development of the research tools (i.e. choosing of questions and questionnaires, platform etc), preparation and approval of the survey questionnaire form with taking into account ethics policies. Instruction and training of personnel. Carrying out its pilot testing and gathering feedback.

Stage 3 Empirical: launch of the online course. Analysis of the online course test launch and gathered feedback. Eliminating shortcomings, making changes, and improving the online course according to the collected feedback. Launch of the online course and dissemination on the Internet (on websites, Facebook, and other social media platforms etc). Control and management of a supportive environment for online course participants, managing the group using developed psychological support methods.

Optional: collection of empirical data (obtained during an online survey within the online course), processing, and interpretation of the obtained data. Preparation for dissemination of the research findings.

Stage 4 Final: summarization, systematization of all results. Statistical processing, analysis, and interpretation of the received data, and preparation of recommendations for psychologists and their supervisors who provide help to civilians affected by war. Optional: preparation for publication of scientific articles. Dissemination of the research findings.

Thus, we have listed the main and optional stages of designing and developing an online course for psychologists who help civilians, especially those affected by the war. Completion of the main stages is necessary for the successful launch of the online course, while the optional ones are aimed at improving the effectiveness of the course and spreading the gained experience.

However, for a better result in providing psychological help to the civilians affected by war, it is necessary to develop and implement a complex system, including updating of professional training standards at the state level, as well as introducing an appropriate system of professional activity licensing.

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