

FEATURES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN UKRAINE DURING THE WAR AND POST-WAR RECOVERY

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Abstract. The ongoing war in Ukraine and the ensuing post-war recovery have significantly transformed the nation's educational and mental health systems. Psychological education has emerged as a vital field, addressing the escalating demand for mental health support, trauma recovery, and resilience-building among affected populations. This article explores the transformative adaptations of psychological education in Ukraine, including the integration of trauma-informed practices, the use of advanced therapeutic methods, and international collaborations. These efforts aim to equip professionals with the necessary skills to foster individual and societal healing in the face of adversity. This study aims to examine the distinctive features and adaptations of psychological education in Ukraine during the war and the post-war recovery period. Specifically, it seeks to identify strategies employed to address widespread trauma, enhance resilience, and promote societal healing. The article also highlights the role of trauma-informed education, community-based mental health initiatives, and global partnerships in shaping these educational transformations. The study employs a qualitative review methodology, synthesizing data from academic literature, institutional reports, and global frameworks on psychological education and mental health strategies. The analysis reveals several key features of psychological education in Ukraine during the war and post-war recovery: crisis-oriented curricula; practical training; remote learning and digital tools; resilience and coping mechanisms; cultural sensitivity and contextual adaptation; global collaborations. The article underscores the need for ongoing research to refine trauma-informed education and evaluate its long-term impact on both students and educators. Psychological education in Ukraine has undergone significant transformation, addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by war and recovery. By integrating advanced therapeutic practices, fostering community resilience, and leveraging global collaborations, Ukraine has established a robust framework for addressing mental health needs in conflict-affected regions. These efforts not only aid immediate recovery but also lay the foundation for a resilient and psychologically aware society.

Keywords: psychological education; trauma-informed practices; mental health; resilience; post-war recovery; Ukraine; global collaboration.

JEL Classification: I 23, I 24, I 28, I 31, H53, H55, H56

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Introduction. The ongoing war and the anticipated post-war recovery have significantly impacted various facets of life in Ukraine, including its educational systems. Among these, psychological education has emerged as a vital field, responding to the growing demand for mental health support and resilience-building within the population. This article examines the unique characteristics of psychological education in Ukraine during this tumultuous period, highlighting its rapid adaptation to meet the challenges posed by conflict and its critical role in fostering individual and societal healing.

From the integration of trauma-informed practices to the emphasis on community-based mental health initiatives, psychological education in Ukraine has undergone transformative changes. These adjustments aim to equip professionals with the skills needed to address widespread trauma, support displaced individuals, and prepare for the nation's long-term recovery. By understanding these features, we gain insight into how education can evolve to meet extraordinary circumstances, ensuring that psychological support becomes an integral component of rebuilding a resilient society.

Literature Review. Psychological education in Ukraine has undergone significant transformation due to the war and the ongoing challenges of post-war recovery. To understand its evolution, it is crucial to explore existing literature on trauma-informed education, the integration of mental health practices in conflict-affected societies, and the specific context of Ukrainian higher education and professional training systems.

Trauma-informed education is a critical framework for understanding how educational systems adapt during and after conflict. According to SAMHSA (2014), trauma-informed approaches involve recognizing the widespread impact of trauma and integrating knowledge about trauma into practices and policies. In Ukraine, these principles have been rapidly adopted to address the psychological needs of students and educators affected by the war. For instance, Koltko-Rivera (2018) highlights that trauma-informed curricula often focus on creating safe and supportive environments, which are essential for fostering resilience in conflict zones.

Mental health education plays a pivotal role in societies recovering from conflict. Betancourt et al. (2010) emphasize that mental health programs in such contexts must address both individual and community-level needs. In Ukraine, the integration of community-based mental health training into psychological education has been particularly notable. Studies by Miller and Rasmussen (2017) suggest that prioritizing localized mental health strategies ensures greater accessibility and cultural relevance, which is essential for addressing the diverse needs of displaced populations and survivors of trauma.

The Ukrainian higher education system has faced unique challenges in adapting to the demands of wartime and post-war recovery. Research by Shevchenko (2022) highlights the shift in priorities within Ukrainian universities, particularly the emphasis on developing specialized programs for training psychologists in crisis intervention and trauma care. Additionally, Dmytrova and Kovalenko (2021) note the increasing collaboration between Ukrainian educational institutions and international

organizations to enhance curricula and provide practical training opportunities for students.

While significant progress has been made, gaps remain in the existing literature. For instance, there is limited research on the long-term impact of trauma-informed education in Ukraine or how these practices influence the mental health of educators themselves. Further studies are also needed to assess the effectiveness of new psychological education programs in addressing the needs of diverse populations, including children, veterans, and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The literature underscores the dynamic evolution of psychological education in Ukraine amidst war and recovery. By integrating trauma-informed practices and emphasizing community-based mental health strategies, Ukrainian institutions are paving the way for innovative approaches to education and mental health care.

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We emphasize the need for ongoing research to improve these practices and ensure their sustainability in the long term.

Aim. The aim of this article is to explore and analyze the distinctive features and transformative adaptations of psychological education in Ukraine during the war and post-war recovery period. The article seeks to identify the strategies employed to address widespread trauma, enhance resilience, and foster societal healing, while highlighting the integration of trauma-informed practices, community-based mental health initiatives, and international collaborations.

Methodology. This article utilizes a qualitative review methodology, synthesizing information from existing literature, institutional reports, and international frameworks on trauma-informed education and mental health strategies. Key areas of focus include:

1. *Literature Review:* Analysis of academic studies and reports detailing the evolution of psychological education in Ukraine amidst conflict.
2. *Case studies:* Examination of specific initiatives and programs implemented in Ukrainian educational institutions to address the mental health needs of war-affected populations.
3. *Comparative analysis:* Exploration of global best practices in psychological education and their adaptation to Ukraine's unique cultural and societal context.

Results. In this article, we systematized the main features of psychological education in Ukraine during the war and in the period of post-war recovery.

The main features of psychological education in Ukraine during the war. The war in Ukraine has brought about profound changes in the structure, focus, and delivery of psychological education. These features can be understood through the following key aspects (Figure 1):

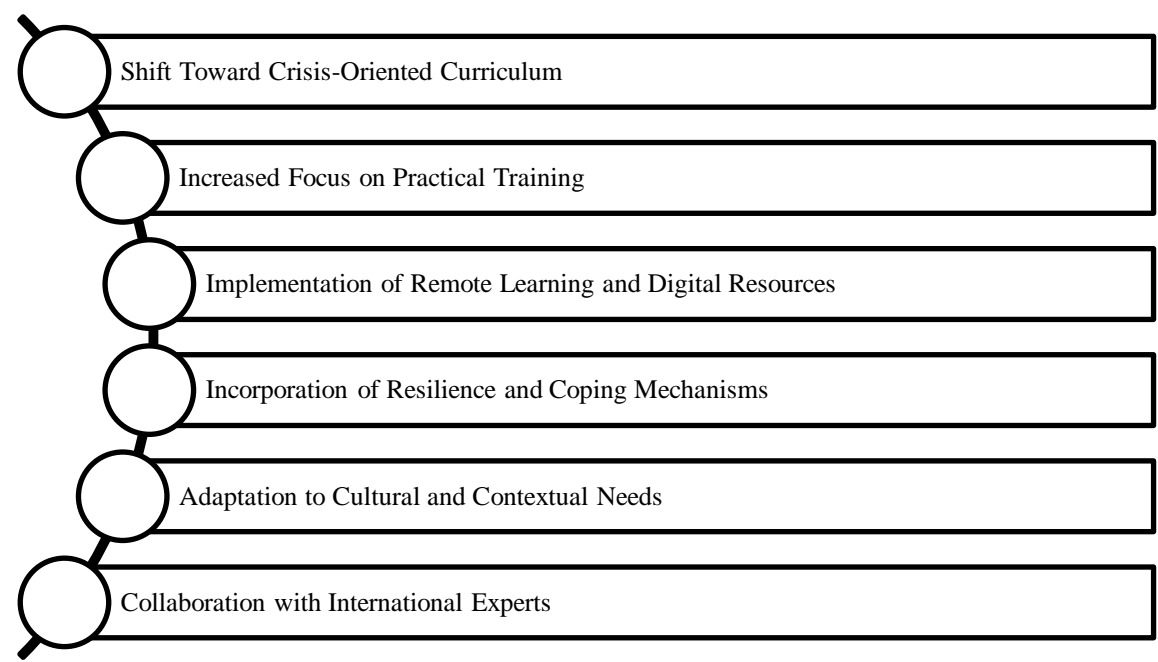


Figure 1. The main features of psychological education in Ukraine during the war

Sources: developed by authors

Shift toward crisis-oriented curriculum. Psychological education programs in Ukraine have undergone rapid restructuring to address the immediate mental health needs of a population experiencing war-related trauma. Universities and training centers have integrated courses on trauma psychology, crisis intervention, and psychological first aid into their curricula. These courses are designed to equip future psychologists with the skills necessary to support individuals and communities coping with displacement, loss, and other war-induced stressors.

Table 1. Expanded Features of Curriculum Shift in Psychological Education

Feature	Description
Enhanced Trauma-Centered Modules	Courses in trauma psychology address war-specific trauma like displacement, combat stress, and grief. Techniques include CBT, narrative therapy, and group therapy.
Specialized Training for Target Groups	Emphasis on collaboration with medical professionals, social workers, and aid groups. Role-playing and simulations prepare students for real-life scenarios.
Interdisciplinary Collaboration	Emphasis on collaboration with medical professionals, social workers, and aid groups. Role-playing and simulations prepare students for real-life scenarios.
Applied Crisis Management Skills	Training in crisis management techniques like de-escalation and community intervention. Case studies of past conflicts integrated into the curriculum.
Ongoing Mentorship and Supervision	Active crisis intervention professionals mentor students, providing real-world insights. Supervised internships offer hands-on experience and feedback.

Sources: developed by authors

Increased focus on practical training. Theoretical knowledge has been supplemented with extensive practical training opportunities. Students are now actively engaged in internships and volunteer work with displaced persons, veterans, and war survivors. This hands-on approach allows trainees to gain real-world experience in delivering mental health support under challenging conditions, such as addressing trauma in displaced populations, dealing with limited resources in conflict

zones, and adapting to high-stress environments. Students are trained to overcome these challenges through intensive simulations, role-playing exercises, and mentorship from experienced professionals who provide guidance on navigating complex psychological scenarios. Collaboration with NGOs and international organizations has also provided additional platforms for practical learning.

Implementation of remote learning and digital resources. Due to the displacement of both students and educators, many psychological education programs have shifted to remote learning platforms. Universities have developed online courses, webinars, and digital libraries to ensure continuity in education. This transition has not only maintained access to education but also introduced new technological tools for delivering psychological support remotely, such as teletherapy and online counseling training. Moreover, institutions have integrated interactive platforms like virtual reality simulations for role-playing therapy sessions, enhancing practical learning. These tools allow students to practice real-life scenarios in a controlled environment. Additionally, educators have adopted hybrid teaching methods, combining online and in-person sessions to accommodate displaced students returning to stable regions. This flexibility ensures inclusivity and minimizes disruption to the educational process.

Incorporation of resilience and coping mechanisms. The curriculum now emphasizes resilience-building and coping strategies as central themes. Students are trained to understand and promote resilience within affected populations, focusing on strengths-based approaches to mental health care. This includes identifying and reinforcing community support systems, teaching stress management techniques such as mindfulness and relaxation exercises and encouraging adaptive coping behaviors. Programs also integrate modules on fostering self-efficacy and optimism in individuals affected by war, highlighting strategies for rebuilding a sense of purpose and control in their lives. This focus aligns with global best practices for psychological education in conflict settings and equips students to address the complex, multifaceted challenges faced by war-affected populations.

Adaptation to cultural and contextual needs. Psychological education programs have increasingly incorporated culturally relevant practices and local traditions. This adaptation ensures that interventions are context-sensitive and resonate with the lived experiences of Ukrainian communities. For example, programs now include training in culturally specific approaches to grief and trauma, incorporating traditional healing practices and community rituals that promote collective recovery. Educators and psychologists are also trained to understand historical and cultural narratives that shape mental health perceptions, ensuring their approaches align with local values and beliefs. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on bilingual education to cater to diverse linguistic groups within the country, particularly Ukrainian and Russian speakers. This approach not only ensures accessibility but also fosters inclusivity in education, recognizing the importance of language in building trust and delivering effective mental health interventions.

Collaboration with international experts. Ukrainian institutions have partnered with international experts and organizations to enhance the quality of education and training. These collaborations have facilitated the exchange of knowledge and

introduced global best practices in trauma care and mental health education. Notable partnerships include programs with the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Red Cross, and prominent European universities that provide workshops, conferences, and joint research initiatives. These collaborations also include resource-sharing, such as access to advanced psychological research and tools, as well as training in the latest therapeutic methods like Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and trauma-focused CBT. Furthermore, these efforts have expanded networking opportunities, enabling Ukrainian professionals to become part of a global community of mental health experts focused on post-conflict recovery.

Main features of psychological education in Ukraine in the period of post-war recovery. In the post-war recovery period, psychological education in Ukraine has focused on addressing the widespread mental health impact of conflict by equipping professionals with the skills and knowledge to support individuals and communities. The key features presented by Table 2.

Table 2. The main features of psychological education in Ukraine in the period of post-war recovery

Feature	Details
Expanded Curriculum for Trauma Recovery	Neurobiological perspectives, advanced therapeutic techniques (TF-CBT, EMDR, NET), holistic recovery approaches, crisis management modules.
Holistic and Integrated Approaches	Somatic experiencing, yoga therapy, nutrition, integrative healthcare models.
Specialized Tracks for Vulnerable Populations	Child and adolescent trauma focus, veteran rehabilitation counseling, GBV survivor support.
Community-Based Mental Health Initiatives	Resilience-building initiatives, participatory approaches, integration of traditional practices.
Technology-Enhanced Education	VR training simulations, telehealth expertise, AI-powered psychological assessment tools.
Ethics and Global Standards in Practice	Conflict-specific ethics, global alignment (APA, WHO standards), case-based ethical training.
Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Learning	Team-based education, multi-agency coordination, leadership training.
Research-Driven Innovations	Applied research, customized metrics for Ukraine's recovery context, global partnerships.
Focus on Accessibility and Sustainability	Mobile clinics, scalable paraprofessional networks, sustainable funding strategies.
Global Knowledge Exchange and Professional Development	Exchange programs, advanced certifications (EMDR, TF-CBT), contributions to global forums.

Sources: developed by authors

Expanded curriculum for trauma recovery - focus on advanced therapeutic techniques (e.g., EMDR, Trauma-Focused CBT), holistic recovery approaches, and neurobiological perspectives on trauma:

- *Neurobiological foundations* - in-depth study of how chronic trauma affects brain functions, such as memory, emotional regulation, and decision-making. This includes training in neurofeedback techniques for addressing trauma-induced dysregulation.
- *Advanced therapeutics* - comprehensive training in trauma-focused interventions, including Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Trauma-

Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), and Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET). These methods are tailored to both individual and group therapy settings.

- *Holistic integration* - encourages combining traditional psychotherapy with somatic therapies, expressive arts, and mindfulness. Students are taught how to customize recovery plans for individuals with diverse needs, integrating community support structures and non-medical interventions.

- *Crisis management modules* - specific courses on managing mass trauma in crisis settings, such as refugee camps or emergency shelters, equipping students to provide immediate psychological first aid.

Holistic and integrated approaches - psychological education in Ukraine during the post-war recovery emphasizes trauma-informed practices, community-based mental health initiatives, and culturally sensitive approaches, integrating global best practices to build resilience and support long-term societal healing.

- *Mind-body therapies* - training in somatic experiencing and yoga therapy helps psychologists address stored trauma in the body, particularly useful for patients experiencing psychosomatic symptoms.

- *Nutrition and lifestyle interventions* - a focus on how diet, exercise, and sleep patterns impact mental health. Students learn to educate clients on lifestyle adjustments to enhance recovery.

- *Integrative healthcare models* - psychologists are trained to collaborate with medical professionals to co-manage conditions such as chronic pain, hypertension, or immune disorders that are exacerbated by trauma.

Specialized tracks for vulnerable populations - includes specialized tracks focused on addressing the unique needs of vulnerable populations, such as children, veterans, and survivors of gender-based violence, through tailored therapeutic and support approaches.

- *Child and adolescent focus* - courses emphasize early interventions for children, including play therapy, trauma-informed school counseling, and strategies for rebuilding attachment security disrupted by war.

- *Support for veterans* - modules train psychologists to manage complex conditions like PTSD, moral injury, and substance use disorders prevalent among veterans. Integration with physical rehabilitation programs enhances holistic care.

- *Gender-based violence (GBV) survivors* - students learn trauma-informed approaches to counseling GBV survivors, including group therapy techniques, empowerment strategies, and advocacy training to help rebuild self-esteem and autonomy.

Community-based mental health initiatives - emphasizes community-based mental health initiatives that foster resilience, support networks, and culturally relevant interventions to promote collective healing and recovery.

- *Resilience building* - programs focus on training psychologists to design interventions that strengthen community support networks, including peer counseling groups and recovery workshops.

- *Participatory approaches* - psychologists are encouraged to involve community members in co-creating mental health solutions, ensuring interventions resonate culturally and socially.
- *Traditional practices* - training incorporates Ukraine's cultural rituals and collective mourning traditions as tools for community-wide recovery, enhancing a sense of belonging and shared healing.

Technology-enhanced education - integrates technology through teletherapy, virtual reality simulations, and AI tools to enhance training, expand access to mental health services, and support remote communities effectively.

- *Virtual reality (VR) training* - simulations recreate real-world scenarios, such as managing displaced populations or responding to emergencies, offering immersive learning experiences.
- *Telehealth services* - students gain expertise in delivering remote therapy through video platforms, addressing both technical and relational challenges in virtual care.
- *AI-powered tools* - training includes using AI for psychological assessments, predictive analytics for at-risk populations, and automated support systems that complement traditional therapy.

Ethics and global standards in practice - emphasizes adherence to global ethical standards and conflict-sensitive practices, ensuring culturally appropriate and responsible mental health care delivery.

- *Conflict-specific ethics* - courses focus on dilemmas unique to post-conflict environments, such as managing survivor guilt, handling dual relationships, and prioritizing care in resource-limited settings.
- *Global alignment* - emphasis on international standards, such as APA and WHO ethical guidelines, ensures psychologists are prepared to work in cross-border or global contexts.
- *Case-based learning* - real-life scenarios are analyzed to help students develop critical thinking skills in navigating complex ethical landscapes.

Interdisciplinary and collaborative learning - promotes interdisciplinary and collaborative learning by fostering teamwork among psychologists, social workers, educators, and healthcare providers to deliver holistic mental health solutions.

- *Team-based education* - psychologists collaborate with social workers, healthcare providers, and educators in simulation workshops to develop a multi-faceted approach to recovery.
- *Multi-agency coordination* - training includes strategies for organizing and leading responses that involve NGOs, local governments, and international aid organizations.
- *Leadership training* - students are prepared for leadership roles in designing and managing large-scale mental health initiatives in post-conflict societies.

Research-driven innovations - prioritizes research-driven innovations, focusing on evidence-based practices, customized metrics, and global partnerships to address the unique psychological impacts of war.

- *Applied research* - students participate in studies examining the efficacy of both traditional Ukrainian practices and evidence-based modern therapies.

- *Customized metrics* - universities are developing new tools to measure resilience, community cohesion, and long-term recovery in ways that reflect the Ukrainian context.
- *Global partnerships* - joint research projects with international institutions ensure that Ukrainian students and professionals have access to cutting-edge developments in mental health science.

Focus on accessibility and sustainability - focuses on accessibility and sustainability by training professionals to deliver mental health services through mobile clinics, telehealth platforms, and scalable community-based networks.

- *Mobile clinics and outreach* - students are trained to deliver care in remote areas through mobile units and telehealth platforms, ensuring underserved populations are reached.
- *Scalable solutions* - programs include training in creating community-based paraprofessional networks, such as training teachers and volunteers to provide basic psychological support.
- *Sustainable funding models* - students learn how to develop grant proposals and partner with local and international funding agencies to sustain mental health initiatives over time.

Global knowledge exchange and professional development - fosters global knowledge exchange and professional development through international collaborations, advanced certifications, and participation in global forums to enhance expertise and adopt best practices.

- *International exchange programs* - students and faculty participate in knowledge-sharing initiatives, such as global conferences and cross-border training workshops.
- *Advanced certifications* - training includes certifications in globally recognized techniques like EMDR, TF-CBT, and family systems therapy, enhancing professional credentials.
- *Contributions to global knowledge* - Ukrainian psychologists contribute to global forums on post-conflict mental health, sharing their unique insights while adopting best practices from other regions.

Discussion. The evolution of psychological education in Ukraine during the war and post-war recovery highlights both the resilience and adaptability of educational systems in crisis. The integration of trauma-informed practices into curricula and the prioritization of practical training have proven pivotal in addressing the mental health needs of war-affected populations. The focus on equipping psychologists with crisis management skills, resilience-building strategies, and community-based approaches underlines the shift toward a more dynamic and responsive educational framework.

The incorporation of digital tools, such as telehealth platforms and VR-based training, signifies a forward-looking approach that ensures accessibility despite displacement and infrastructural challenges. Furthermore, partnerships with international organizations and adherence to global ethical standards have elevated the quality and scope of psychological education in Ukraine, fostering a globally competitive cohort of mental health professionals.

However, significant gaps remain in the literature and practice. Limited research

exists on the long-term impacts of trauma-informed education and its effects on educators and students alike. Moreover, while culturally relevant practices have been integrated, further efforts are needed to evaluate their effectiveness and scalability across diverse communities within Ukraine. The lack of comprehensive frameworks for assessing the psychological well-being of marginalized populations, such as children and displaced persons, highlights the need for continued innovation and targeted interventions.

Conclusion. The transformative changes in psychological education in Ukraine underscore its critical role in both wartime resilience and post-war recovery. By prioritizing trauma recovery, community resilience, and practical skill-building, Ukrainian institutions have set a benchmark for education systems in conflict-affected regions. The integration of advanced therapeutic methods, digital learning platforms, and international collaboration ensures a sustainable foundation for addressing the nation's mental health needs.

To build upon these advancements, ongoing research, and the development of scalable, culturally sensitive practices will be essential. Expanding outreach programs and ensuring inclusivity for underserved populations, alongside fostering global knowledge exchange, will position Ukraine as a leader in post-conflict psychological education. These efforts not only address immediate recovery needs but also lay the groundwork for a more resilient and psychologically aware society in the long term.

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