

The Ukraine crisis: Mental health resources for clinicians and researchers

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Abstract

The mental health consequences of the war in Ukraine will be enormous. Mental health professionals who are providing care for people in Ukraine, or those resettled elsewhere, may require access to standardized and validated assessment tools. We have developed a repository of mental health measures that are available in Ukrainian, Russian and English and can be accessed at www.traumameasuresglobal.com/ukraine.

Keywords

mental health, resources, Ukraine war, assessment, children and young people

The world has watched in horror as the recent events in Ukraine have unfolded. After a long period of experiencing anticipatory threat with Russian troops amassing on their border, the Ukrainian population is now subjected to a full military invasion with death, destruction and displacement being a daily reality. It almost goes without saying that the mental health consequences for the Ukrainian people will be enormous. Already in 2016 there were 1.8 million internally displaced Ukrainians (UNHCR, 2016), and the ‘Internally Displaced Person’s Mental Health Survey in Ukraine’ (Roberts et al., 2017), carried out from March to May 2016, demonstrated that mental health problems were common among IDPs in Ukraine. 22% of IDPs had symptoms of depression, 18% of anxiety (Roberts et al., 2019), and 55% reported significant levels of somatisation (Cheung

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et al., 2019). For current drinkers, potentially hazardous drinking was reported by 14.3% of men and 1.7% of women (Ramachandran et al., 2019). The prevalence of ICD-11 PTSD was 21% and 57.6% of those experiencing clinically significant levels of impairment (Shevlin et al., 2018). To place all this in a global context, a recent study estimated the cross-national lifetime prevalence of PTSD at 3.9% (Koenen et al., 2017). These mental health needs among IDPs in Ukraine occurred in a context of very limited availability of mental health services, with 74% of participants who likely required mental health and psychosocial support care not receiving it (Roberts et al., 2019).

At present, the Ukrainian community of mental health professionals are providing help and support in unimaginably difficult conditions; several hotlines operate, volunteers are mobilized and trained in psychological first aid provision, and mobile crisis intervention stations are in operation. However, in chaotic situations, there is a risk of offering non-evidence-based interventions, and the collection of evidence is crucially important and needs to be considered as inevitable part of ongoing and future interventions. Resources are required for this.

The International Trauma Consortium (ITC) is a collaboration of researchers and clinicians working in the field of traumatic stress studies. In order to assist mental health clinicians and researchers we have collated and hosted a range of established and validated mental health measures that have been translated into Ukrainian and Russian and these are now freely available to download at <https://www.traumameasuresglobal.com/>. This repository includes measure of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), complex PTSD, generalised anxiety, depression, somatisation, trauma exposure, and functional impairment. Some of these assessment tools may be suitable for older adolescents, but there is a need to develop a repository of validated mental health measures for children and young people. We have started this process by adding Ukrainian and Russian versions of the child and adolescent version of the International Trauma Questionnaire (to assess PTSD and complex PTSD) and the Child and Adolescent Trauma Screen. We intend to include more measures, as and when they become available. We ask clinicians and researchers to provide us with any translated versions of measures that they currently have to add to the repository, or send us measures that they think may be useful and we will endeavour to have them translated and hosted on the website. We'd also welcome any other resources that would benefit child and adolescent mental health professionals and researchers (email MS or PH).

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