

Learning in Crisis: How War Transformed Professional Development and Psychological Care

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Introduction:

The onset of war in Ukraine created unparalleled challenges for psychologists, pushing them to adapt their practices to address trauma, displacement, and acute stress. Amid these circumstances, learning and professional development became essential not only for gaining knowledge but also for fostering resilience and building a supportive community. This research explores how learning seminars during the war went beyond traditional educational functions, acting as therapeutic gatherings that offered hope, connection, and skill development in a time of isolation and uncertainty.

Methods:

Between March and May 2022, a series of online and in-person trauma-focused seminars were conducted, engaging over 300 participants, including psychologists, educators, and psychology students from Ukraine. The seminars combined theoretical frameworks in trauma psychology with interactive, skills-based training sessions. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through post-seminar surveys to evaluate participants' learning outcomes, emotional experiences, and the broader psychological impact of the program. Feedback from participants was analyzed to identify patterns of professional and personal growth, as well as communal and therapeutic benefits.

Results:

Findings reveal two primary outcomes. First, the crisis sharpened psychologists' focus on specialized trauma-related interventions, fostering rapid skill acquisition in areas such as crisis intervention and resilience building. Second, seminars became a source of collective healing, providing participants with emotional support, shared purpose, and hope. Psychologists reported that these gatherings helped reduce feelings of professional isolation, encouraged the exchange of innovative ideas, and bolstered both personal and professional resilience.

Discussion:

This research highlights the transformative potential of learning in times of crisis. It underscores how challenging social contexts can reframe the purpose of education, turning it into a tool for collective growth and emotional recovery. These findings contribute to a broader understanding of the interplay between learning, professional adaptation, and community-building during global challenges, offering insights relevant to the teaching of psychology in various contexts.

Is the first author also the speaker?

Yes

If first author is not the speaker, please indicate speaker's name here:**Please indicate up to five keywords regarding the content of your contribution**

professional development, learning in crisis, psychological education, resilience, war-time learning

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