



# GENOCIDES IN THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF UKRAINIANS: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICE OF COPING

The 20th century was a century of repeated attempts to exterminate Ukrainians. Repressions on the territory of Ukraine have not stopped since the beginning of the 20th century and continued long after independence.

## How was the "Ukrainian question" resolved in the Soviet Union?

- Red Terror (1918-1920)
- Holodomors (1921-1923, 1932/33, 1946-47)
- Repression against religions (since the 1920s)
- Dismantling / Collectivization (1920s-30s)
- Repression against the scientific and technical elite (1920-20s)
- Shot Renaissance (1920-30s)
- The Great Terror (1936-38)
- Deportations (1920-40s)
- The fight against the insurgent movement (1940s)
- Gulag (1930-50s)
- Struggle with the dissident movement (1950-70s)
- Repressive psychiatry (since 1921)
- ...

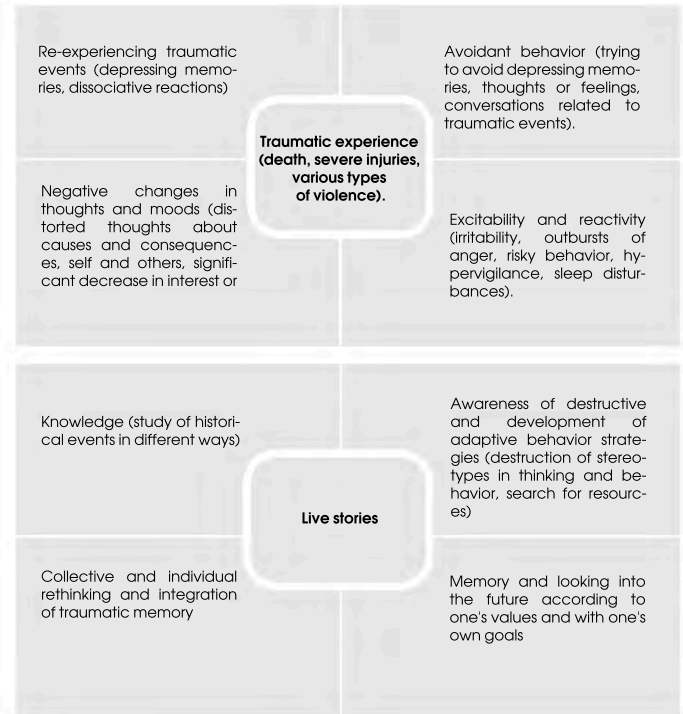
All these events together and each of them separately have the main features of collective trauma:

- a large number of injured
- affects direct participants and people not directly involved in traumatic events, sometimes involving the whole society,
- not limited in space
- stretching in time (often passing through several generations).
- victims of collective trauma are not individual people, not even many people, but social groups as a whole.

The main factors that increase the impact of repressions of the 20th century on modern generations of Ukrainians and cause transgenerational transmission of traumatic experience.

- ✔ traumatic events reach the level of collective trauma, if their indicators go beyond the usual framework that determines the scale of the tragedy, the strength of the trauma and the severity of the consequences - the number of dead, the scale of the event, the significance of the dead.
- ✔ the level of experiencing injustice and the degree of innocence of the victims
- ✔ circumstances when people suffer not from faceless natural forces (for example, ecological disaster), but as a result of conscious or purposeful actions of people (execution, torture, exile, etc.)
- ✔ impossibility (or inability) to resist the traumatic force or subject, forced passivity of the victim (the less ability to resist the aggressor's actions, the greater the injury).

When collective trauma becomes transgenerational, we can talk about signs of post-traumatic stress disorder at the collective level. Society as a whole has all the signs of post-trauma. At the same time, each symptom can be dealt with in different ways



## Structure of focus group work on overcoming transgenerational traumas of the soviet period:

- Family photo album. Working with family photos from the Soviet period. Group members look for associations to photos that have responded.
- Family stories. Participants share their own reflections on the Soviet period in the life of their family, present photos and analyze (look for controversial moments, discuss resources and traumatic events in the lives of family members at that time).
- Behavioral analysis. Reflective circle on the topic "How is our family history reflected in the modern life and behavior of some family members?".
- Cognitive restructuring. Discussion "What are Soviet symbols talking about in our time?".
- Emotional restructuring. Participants review the photos and note their own emotions.
- Brainstorm "What can I do for 'personal decommunization'".

## Conclusions based on the results of the focus groups:

Teenagers and young men, preparing for classes, aroused interest in family stories. Some of the participants heard about certain events from the family's life for the first time.

Dissonance between associations/emotions and content. For example, a photo from the parade evoked emotions of satisfaction, elation, joy, until it turned out that this photo was taken on May 1, 1986, immediately after the Chernobyl accident.

The importance of critical thinking. Teenagers and young men are able to critically interpret individual symbols, events, and stories. Reflective analysis promotes the development of critical thinking and informed generalization.

Awareness of the personal meanings associated with each photograph caused a circle of discussions and a chain of recognition.

Echoes. The participants realized that the psychological consequences of the Soviet period for their families were mistrust of others, fear of expressing one's opinion, hoarding of products, shame about wealth, fear of standing out, etc.

The value of the environment. The participants had different levels of evaluation and generalizations - the determining factor here was not age, but the environment (teenagers who systematically discuss historical events within the framework of a scout group showed greater interest, critical thinking, depth of conclusions).

Interest of children, parents, teachers, public. There is no public demand for such events. However, the dissemination of information about the events has aroused public interest and proposals for implementation for various groups.

## Bibliography

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