

## **TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE FAMILY SYSTEM DURING THE WAR**

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The family has long been a subject of study in psychology. There are various theoretical approaches to analyzing the features of family functioning and to choosing methods of psychological assistance to families in difficult life conditions, including during war. The period of war always brings changes to the family system. Most often, families face the problem of distancing: some family members join the army to protect the country's territory, some go abroad, and some stay in the occupied territories. Family members may live in different cities or different countries. The composition of the family is changing. Both the structural and functional characteristics of the family system change significantly.

In systemic family therapy, the family is viewed as an integral system aspiring to the protection and development of the existing bonds. If one element of the system changes, a reaction occurs that trigger the entire system to change.

During the war, a family's role structure changes. Family roles are sets of patterns attached to each member of the family system. The family's role structure defines what, how, when, and in which order family members are supposed to do when interacting with each other. The role behavior of family members can be tied to the fulfillment of defined responsibilities and to supporting internal family

interaction. There are different family roles. If the person(s) who performed important roles for preserving family homeostasis is removed from the family due to wartime, the role structure of the family is transformed and the role of, for example, a father is taken over by his son or daughter. When the father returns from war, he may find that his roles are already being occupied by other family members and may feel rejected. This can cause further conflicts and new painful transformations in the family.

Family system adapters include family standards and rules, values, traditions, and rituals. Rituals are an organized system on sustainable actions typical for a particular family. This is a very important indicator of the functioning of the family system, which helps to create ties between family members. A family ritual includes patterns of behavior that are shared by all or most family members and have a symbolic meaning for them. Rituals reflect family traditions and are related to cultural, religious, and ethnic aspects of family functioning. Despite sociocultural differences, there are some universal family rituals that include family holidays, family traditions, and family habits [1].

Family rituals are difficult to practice if the family is divided. That is why Ukrainian families are inventing new ways to maintain the continuity of family traditions: they record videos, arrange meetings in messengers, transform the process of rituals or replace them with completely new ones.

The relation between the structural components of the family system can be characterized by various factor. One of the most important is the family cohesion. Cohesion can be defined as the psychological distance between family members, which reflects the intensity of the family members' individual feelings about the nature of their relationships. Members of cohesive families are able to combine their independence with close emotional bonds with other family members. Close, emotionally fulfilling relationships are established between family members, while at the same time keeping respect for personal space. In times of war, cohesion is a crucial condition for maintaining a family. The emotional closeness and mutual understanding developed in pre-war peaceful times allow family members to provide emotional support to each other and express care and attention.

Flexibility is the ability of the family system to adapt to changes in the external and internal family situation. To function effectively, families need an optimized combination of internal family changes and the ability to maintain their characteristics. In times of war, the ability of the family to be flexible and adapt to changing conditions is a crucial condition for its preservation, as external conditions are unstable and have a negative impact on all functional features of the family system.

In general, during the war, the rules and standards of family interaction change, which are necessary to maintain family homeostasis. During the war, most families lose their stability, but flexible and cohesive families are able to adapt to new conditions and maintain emotionally closeness.

1. Friesen, John D. Rituals and Family Strength. *Counseling, Marriage and the Family*. 1990. Vol. 19. № 1. P. 39-48.