

THE PLACE OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE SYSTEM OF MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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In today's context of global social, economic and medical challenges, the issue of mental health is of particular importance, which necessitates the improvement of the system of psychological assistance to the population. Clinical psychologists play a key role in ensuring mental well-being, as they diagnose, prevent, correct and rehabilitate mental disorders, contributing to improving the quality of life of patients and their social adaptation. Given the increasing prevalence of mental and psychosomatic diseases, as well as the impact of stress factors, the role of clinical psychologists in the system of mental health professionals is becoming increasingly important, which makes it important to study their place and functions in this system.

The question of the place of clinical psychologists in the system of mental health professionals is the subject of a thorough scientific analysis by domestic researchers. A significant contribution to the development of the theory and practice of clinical psychology was made by A. M. Osmanova and G. V. Khorunzhenko, who in their textbook «Clinical Psychology» reveal the history of the industry in Ukraine, the current state, research methods and applied capabilities of clinical psychology, in particular its preventive orientation and role in shaping the structure of the psychological service in health care [6]. A significant contribution was also made by Y. P. Nikonenko, who in his work «Clinical Psychology» covers the issues of diagnosis of mental disorders, psychology of the relationship between the patient and the health care worker, as well as preventive and psychotherapeutic aspects of care, which expands the understanding of the functional role of a clinical psychologist [4]. Important is also the contribution of I. S. Klymenko, N. Yuristovska and L. Y. Muntyan, who analyze the role of medical psychology in the context of military

conflict, in particular, in the article «The role of medical psychology in ensuring mental health in the condition of armed aggression of the Russia» emphasizes the importance of psychological support for the population, the formation of health-saving behavior and the implementation of life values in conditions of constant instability [2]. Thus, modern scientists comprehensively study various aspects of the activities of clinical psychologists, which allows them to determine their place in the modern mental health system.

A clinical psychologist is a highly qualified specialist who diagnoses, prevents, corrects and rehabilitates mental and psychosomatic disorders in children and adults, working in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, psychiatric institutions, private clinics, social services and educational institutions. The main areas of activity of a clinical psychologist are psychodiagnostics, psychotherapeutic support, psychological counseling, psychocorrection, rehabilitation work, psychoeducation and prevention of mental disorders [7].

A distinctive feature of clinical psychologists is their ability to integrate knowledge of pathopsychology, neuropsychology, psychophysiology, and psychotherapy to develop individualized intervention plans, which provides a comprehensive approach to treating patients with various forms of mental disorders. Clinical psychologists use modern diagnostic tools, psychometric techniques, and various therapeutic approaches, including cognitive behavioral therapy, psychoanalysis, and systemic family therapy, which have proven effective in scientific research [1].

An important component of the clinical psychologist's work is interdisciplinary cooperation with psychiatrists, neurologists, general practitioners and other medical specialists, which allows for a holistic approach to the treatment of mental disorders [8]. Unlike psychiatrists, clinical psychologists are not authorized to prescribe medications, but their role is to provide psychotherapeutic support, psychological rehabilitation, and patient support at all stages of treatment.

In today's environment, particularly in Ukraine, where the war is ongoing and the level of stress among the population is increasing, the role of clinical psychologists is significantly enhanced. According to the order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine № 1782 of 30.09.2022, clear tasks, responsibilities, level of knowledge and qualification requirements for clinical psychologists are defined, which is aimed at improving the quality of psychological care [3]. The main tasks of a clinical psychologist are psychoprophylaxis of the development of mental, psychosomatic and behavioral disorders, psychodiagnostics, psychological correction, psychotherapeutic support, as well as psychoeducation and training [8].

Scientific studies show that timely treatment by a clinical psychologist helps to avoid complications and chronicity of mental problems, and also helps to improve the quality of life of patients. Modern research also confirms the effectiveness of clinical psychologists in reducing the burden of mental disorders on society and the economy, emphasizing the need to develop innovative and sustainable intervention strategies [1].

Clinical psychologists are actively involved in multidisciplinary teams in healthcare facilities, which emphasizes their fundamental role in the development and implementation of integrated care models [5]. They assess the mental state of patients, develop therapeutic plans, conduct interventions in crisis situations, and participate in prevention and rehabilitation programs. It is important that they are involved in promoting knowledge about mental health, conducting educational activities for the public and professional trainings for medical staff.

Given the wide range of professional tasks and activities, it is advisable to systematize the key functions of a clinical psychologist for a clearer understanding of their contribution to the field of mental health (Table 1).

Table 1 - The main functions of a clinical psychologist

The function of a clinical psychologist	Description
Psychodiagnostics	Identification of psychological problems, assessment of mental state, application of diagnostic techniques
Psychotherapeutic support	Work with psychosomatic disorders, PTSD, depression, use of modern therapeutic approaches
Psychological counseling	Providing support in crisis situations, developing recommendations for patients and their families
Psychocorrection	Assistance in changing behavioral and emotional reactions, individual and group sessions
Rehabilitation work	Restoration of psycho-emotional state after illness or injury, participation in rehabilitation programs
Psychoeducation	Informing the public about mental health, holding educational events
Prevention of mental disorders	Preventing psychological problems, preventing burnout of healthcare workers

Data compiled by the author

Clinical psychologists are central to the system of mental health professionals, providing an interdisciplinary approach, effective diagnosis, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of mental disorders. Their work contributes to the formation of integrated care models, improving the quality of life of patients and the development of the mental health care system in general.

Thus, clinical psychologists are an integral part of the system of mental health professionals, performing a wide range of tasks from diagnosis to rehabilitation and prevention of mental disorders. Their activities are based on modern scientific approaches, integration of knowledge from various fields of psychology and medicine, which provides a comprehensive approach to solving mental health problems. Given the growing social and medical challenges, as well as the reform of the healthcare system in Ukraine, clinical psychologists play a key role in providing accessible, effective and high-quality psychological assistance to the population. Further development of professional training, improvement of the regulatory framework, and

introduction of innovative methods of work are the key to increasing the effectiveness of clinical psychologists in the mental health care system.

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