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PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN PANDEMIC PERIOD (features of online webinars support)

Abstract. The article analyzes the features of technical organization and support of online webinars created for psychological support of the elderly and their families, their testing in social networks and use on the Internet by the target audience. The peculiarities of using the ZOOM platform, AnswerGarden and Padlet services to conduct a series of webinars created within the objectives of the project «Psychological support for the elderly in pandemic period», recommended for implementation in 2020-2021 with grant support by the National Research Foundation of Ukraine. Using online services for a series of webinars allowed participants to save time, as they do not need to spend it on the way to the venue of the webinars; most of the participants were in different cities and regions of Ukraine; Convenience was also important, as webinars participants could be in a convenient place. The results of webinars participant's registration are covered, in particular: age category, type of employment, territorial affiliation. Here is an example of statistics on webinars views on the YouTube channel «Vik Obranyh». It is determined that the advantages of using webinars are: providing information accessible, understandable to anyone, language, taking into account the age characteristics of the elderly, reaching a large audience. The practical value of webinars lies in influencing the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components of the individual's psyche to provide psychological support to older people who are in difficult life circumstances due to forced self-isolation. The social effect of webinars is that the use of the information obtained will help to improve the psychological well-being of older people in conditions of forced self-isolation. Difficulties identified during the webinar cycle were identified. The ways of high-quality provision of webinars organization, attraction of the audience with the help of advertising posts and e-mail mailings are revealed.

Key words: psychological support, elderly people, webinars, social networks, ZOOM, technical support.

ПСИХОЛОГІЧНА ПІДТРИМКА ЛІТНІХ ОСІБ В ПЕРІОД КАРАНТИНУ (особливості проведення онлайн вебінарів)

Анотація. У статті проаналізовано особливості технічної організації та підтримки вебінарів створених для психологічної підтримки літніх осіб та їхніх родин, їх апробацію в соціальних мережах та використання в Інтернеті цільовою аудиторією. Окреслено особливості застосування платформи ZOOM та сервісів AnswerGarden й Padlet для проведення циклу вебінарів створених у межах завдань проекту «Психологічна підтримка літніх осіб у період карантину», що рекомендований до реалізації у 2020–2021 рр. за грантової підтримки Національного фонду досліджень України. Використання онлайн сервісів для проведення циклу вебінарів дозволило учасникам зекономити час, оскільки не потрібно його витрачати на дорогу до місця проведення вебінару; більшість учасників знаходилися в різних містах та регіонах України, що зумовило охопити значну кількість бажаючих взяти участь у вебінарах; також важливу роль відіграла зручність, оскільки учасники вебінарів могли знаходитися у зручному для них місці. Висвітлено результати реєстрації учасників вебінарів, зокрема: вікову категорію, вид зайнятості, територіальну приналежність. Наведено приклад статистичних даних щодо переглядів вебінарів на YouTube каналі «Вік обраних». Визначено, що перевагами використання вебінарів є: надання інформації доступною, зрозумілою будь-якій людині, мовою, врахування вікових особливостей літніх людей, охоплення великої аудиторії. Практична цінність вебінарів полягає у впливі на емоційну, когнітивну, поведінкову складові психіки особистості для психологічної підтримки літніх осіб, які перебувають у складних життєвих обставинах у зв'язку з вимушеною самоізоляцією. Соціальний ефект від вебінарів втілюється в тому, що використання отриманої інформації сприятиме покращенню психологічного самопочуття літніх людей в умовах вимушеної самоізоляції. Виявлено труднощі, що виникали під час проведення циклу вебінарів. Розкрито шляхи якісного забезпечення організації вебінарів, залучення аудиторії за допомогою рекламних постів та e-mail розсилок.

Ключові слова: психологічна підтримка, літні люди, вебінари, соціальні мережі, платформа ZOOM, технічна підтримка.

Introduction. Elderly people are at special risk groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to treatment and other services, the loss of loved ones, the difficult situation in

specialized medical institutions, restrictions on visits and contacts, deteriorating financial situation, the impact of isolation on the elderly - these are just some of problems associated with the pandemic. The special vulnerability of the elderly encouraged a team of scientists led by Olena Kovalenko (Doctor of Psychology, Professor, Chief Researcher of the Department of Andragogy, Ivan Ziaziun Institute of Pedagogical Education and Adult Education of the NAES of Ukraine) created a project «Psychological support for the elderly in pandemic period». Implementation of the project became possible in 2020-2021 by the grant support of the National Research Fund of Ukraine based on the results of the competition «Science for Human Security».

The aim of the project is to promote the development of an elderly person who is in difficult life circumstances due to quarantine restrictions. This involves helping the elderly to overcome the difficulties associated with these limitations through the organization of their daily lives. The essence is to involve the elderly in various activities, the ability to influence their relationships and experiences.

The main tasks of the Project:

1. To create measures for psychological support of elderly people in quarantine and overcoming life difficulties caused by forced isolation, in particular, to create recommendations for elderly people, prepare a series of videos for them and their families, create social media pages and YouTube channel.

2. Develop a program of practical workshops for people who professionally interact with the elderly to acquaint them with the psychological characteristics of this age people and learn to interact with them during forced isolation; develop the content of practical workshops and conduct them; prepare a textbook for those who professionally interact with the elderly in the psychology of this age people; prepare and conduct a series of online webinars and radio broadcasts for a wide range of people on the psychology and support of the elderly; to hold an online scientific-practical conference on psychological support for the elderly and prepare its recommendations; to prepare scientific publications based on the results of the study (Kovalenko, 2020).

The aim of the study is outline features of the organization and technical component of preparation and carrying out online webinars.

Theoretical basis and research methods.

The basis of this study is a personal-communicative approach, according to which the development of personality as a system in old age is determined by its past, but directed to the future. Therefore, firstly, the characteristics of the elderly are a consequence of his/her previous existence (lifestyle), and secondly, a person at this age should be active, in particular in communication and various activities. An important factor that determines the whole process of personality development in old age is its psychological well-being, interpersonal communication, which results in the formation of emotional relationships with people (Kovalenko, 2015).

Results. The executors of the project «Psychological support of the elderly in pandemic period», implemented with the grant support by the National Research Foundation of Ukraine, developed 5 online webinars:

- «How to overcome loneliness through self-realization»

<https://youtu.be/BLriNvL89GM>;

- «Information Security for the Elderly»

<https://youtu.be/9oJAXson8fA>;

- «How to support yourself and your loved one in a difficult moment»

<https://youtu.be/WsmlqvvEU-Y>;

- «Words and their meanings: what we say and how older people understand it»

<https://youtu.be/IY-YVJliA4>;

- «Secrets of communication with older people» <https://youtu.be/IY-YVJliA4>.

The webinars were moderated by the Head of the Project Olena Kovalenko. Speakers of the webinars are the executors of the project: Liudmyla Moskovets, Oksana Ivanova, Tetiana Kravtsova, Liudmyla Diachenko, Halyna Tataurova-Osyka and Olena Ihnatovych. Technical support and organization of webinars was provided by the project executors – Kyrill Kotun, Kateryna Hodlevska.

The series of webinars was held from 16 to 29 June 2021. All webinars are freely available on the YouTube channel of the project «Age of the Chosen» <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9O0KHcTiqCOuFzPiYP-GDQ>.

The purpose of the series of webinars was: to acquaint participants with the psychological characteristics of the elderly, the problems that arise at this age in conditions of forced self-isolation: loneliness, stress and anxiety, manipulation and fraud, premature aging, ina-

bility to communicate effectively, etc.; outline ways to solve these problems, promote awareness of the search for resources for the elderly and their immediate environment, take into account the meaning of words and their perception by the elderly, emphasize the importance of interpersonal communication for the elderly, the need for comfortable aging.

Consider the tools that were used during the preparation and conduct of the webinars cycle.

All webinars were online in the ZOOM platform. Let's highlight the advantages of this platform that led us to choose it: easy access - works well on PC and laptops, as well as tablets or smartphones; a wide range of tools - the platform has many different tools to engage listeners in the process and motivate them to interact with speakers (interactive whiteboard, polls, stickers, meeting rooms, etc.); encryption - broadcasts are protected from the presence of unwanted audiences (you can create both open and closed webinars); unlimited number of broadcasts - it is possible to create the required number of broadcasts for the webinar, as well as for training and teamwork; interaction with the audience - the platform allows not only to speak, but also in real time to communicate with participants, giving tasks and answering questions, chatting, reproducing previously recorded appeals.

In order to make the series of webinars interesting for the audience, the executors of the project for each webinar thought over: the scenarios according to which the speaker conducted the broadcast; equipment, tools and the correctness, appropriateness of their use; the behavior of the speaker in the frame and when interacting with the audience; stability of video and audio flow; adjust the display of the screen or part of it; additional elements; prompt solution of technical problems; development of presentations, pre-recording and video processing.

To ensure the audience, relevant posts were created with advertising on the social pages of the Project, in particular on: Facebook page «Psychological support for the elderly» – <https://www.facebook.com/project.ipood> (Fig. 1) and Instagram «Age of the Chosen» – <https://www.instagram.com/project.ipood/> (Fig. 2). Accordingly, each post contained in-

formation about: the topic of the webinar, the date and time of the webinar, the ID and access code, and a link to the registration form. Registration forms have been created in Google Forms to determine the age category, type of employment, territorial affiliation of webinar participants. Also in the registration form, participants could answer the question why they were interested in the topic of the webinar.

Fig.1. Screenshot of the post on webinar in Facebook

After analyzing the information provided by Google Form registered participants of the webinar, we can say that:

- A total of 650 participants took part in the webinars;
- Participants were represented by different age categories: up to 20 years – 0.28%, 21–30 years – 8.44%, 31–40 years – 27.56%, 41–50 years – 35.86%, 51–60 years – 17.56%, 61–70 years – 9.56%, 71+ years – 0.78%;
- Among the participants were persons who study (8.18%), work (93.96%), do not work (1.38%), are retired (3.7%);
- Working participants are involved in the following institutions: higher education institutions (52%), general secondary education institutions (41%), charitable foundations and public organizations providing social assis-

Fig.5. Screenshot of the participants working in Padlet (webinar «Words and their meanings...»)

The use of interactive interaction with the participants of the webinars allowed to reveal their attitude to the issues discussed, encouraged thinking about the urgent problems of the elderly, which were exacerbated during the quarantine. During the webinars, attention was focused on the need to create conditions for comfortable aging, attentive and caring attitude towards the elderly. Webinars encouraged to think about the peculiarities of their behavior, provided an impact on cognitive, emotional and behavioral components of the psyche of the individual. The direct participation of the elderly allowed them to rethink their age, to meet the need for communication through chat; Participants of other age groups had the opportunity to analyze the features of their own interaction with the elderly, to think about how they can help the elderly to overcome stressful situations, to adapt to new living conditions.

We cannot ignore the difficulties encountered during the webinars, namely: presenting the webinar material in an easy, accessible form, understandable to participants not related to research and teaching activities; interactive interaction while working in ZOOM, as not all webinar participants were technically prepared; partial absence of eye contact; a large number of chat messages to which the speaker needs to respond, etc.

The series of webinars can be viewed on the YouTube channel of the Project «Age of the Chosen». According to the channel's statistics (Oktober 2021), the number of webinar views is as follows: «How to overcome loneliness through self-realization» – 458, «Information security of the elderly» – 226, «How to support yourself and a loved one in a difficult moment» – 287, «Words and their meanings: what we say and how older people understand

it» – 265 «Secrets of communication with old people» – 306 (Age of the Chosen, 2021a).

The series of webinars received positive feedback from participants, both during and after the webinars, for example: thanks for the video on the YouTube channel (Fig. 6) and feedback from colleagues on the websites of higher education institutions (Fig. 7).

Fig.6. Screenshot from YouTube channel of the Project

Fig. 7. Screenshot of the news posted on the page of the Department of Management and Business Administration of the Faculty of Economics and Management of Cherkasy State Technological University

Conclusions. According to the World Health Organization, the elderly include people over the age of 60. The elderly population is a heterogeneous group. In geriatrics and gerontology, it is reasonable to believe that the physiological and psychological traits of older people change significantly every five years. Yes, people between the ages of 60 and 65 have different needs than people between the ages of 65 and 70; the desires of people aged 70-75 differ from the desires of people aged 75-80. Older people are not a burden to socie-

ty, they can be a prerequisite for improving living standards in the country, a powerful factor in the humanization of society. But it is important to emphasize that social isolation in the long run makes life unbearable for everyone. That is why in the implementation of the project «Psychological support for the elderly in pandemic period» one of the tasks was to form a new perspective on the problems of the elderly, as well as features of their activities, behavior, emotional state, communication during quarantine. To cover this information, a series of online webinars were held, which were attended by different age groups from all regions of Ukraine.

The advantages of using webinars are the availability of information, comprehensibility

to anyone, taking into account the age characteristics of the elderly and reaching a large audience. The practical value of webinars lies in influencing the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components of the individual's psyche to provide psychological support to older people who are in difficult life circumstances due to forced self-isolation. The social effect of webinars – the use of information obtained will improve the psychological well-being of older people in conditions of forced self-isolation. The best tools for achieving the goal of the webinars cycle were: ZOOM platform, AnswerGarden, Padlet, Google Drive services.

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