



PSYCHOLOGICAL REHABILITATION OF CHILDREN EXPERIENCING TRAUMATIC STRESS OF WAR

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Charitable Foundation



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OF CHILDREN



voices.org.ua

The Mission of the Foundation:

We restore psychological resilience, the strength to grow and thrive, and the right to be heard for children affected by war, helping them regain faith in themselves, a sense of support, and the ability to move forward with the help of professional psychological care and a safe environment.

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I DREW – AND I AM NO LONGER
AFRAID OF THE DARKNESS.
SOMEHOW, IT HELPED ME.
I JUST DREW WHAT I WANTED –
AND THAT’S IT,
SAID 9-YEAR-OLD SOFIIA.

"CAMP+" - THREE-WEEK FAMILY RECOVERY CAMP FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMATIC STRESS DURING MILITARY ACTIONS IN UKRAINE



Last year, we arranged family camps for **60 families** (85 children and 61 adults).

They are:

- residents of frontline territories;
- people who escaped occupation;
- those who have gone through traumatic experiences;
- mothers with children whose husbands are missing or in Russian captivity;
- families whose children were forcibly deported to russia.



THE OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH

The number of participants: **60 families**

Period of data collection: June 2024 – August 2024

EVALUATION TOOLS:

- Children's Emotional Manifestation Scale (SDQ questionnaire), CRIES-8
- Parental Well-Being Questionnaire (Parental Stress Index, shorten version)
- Focus groups and interviews with parents
- Pre-post surveys (pre/post design)





POSITIVE IMPACT ON CHILDREN

- **Reduction of anxiety and fear symptoms**

68% of children have demonstrated decreased anxiety symptoms after participation

- **Improving of social interaction**

72% of children have become more open in communication with the peers

- **Improvements in sleep and eating behavior**

59% of parents reported normalized sleep and appetite in their children

POSITIVE IMPACT ON PARENTS AND FAMILIES

- **Reduced parental stress levels:**

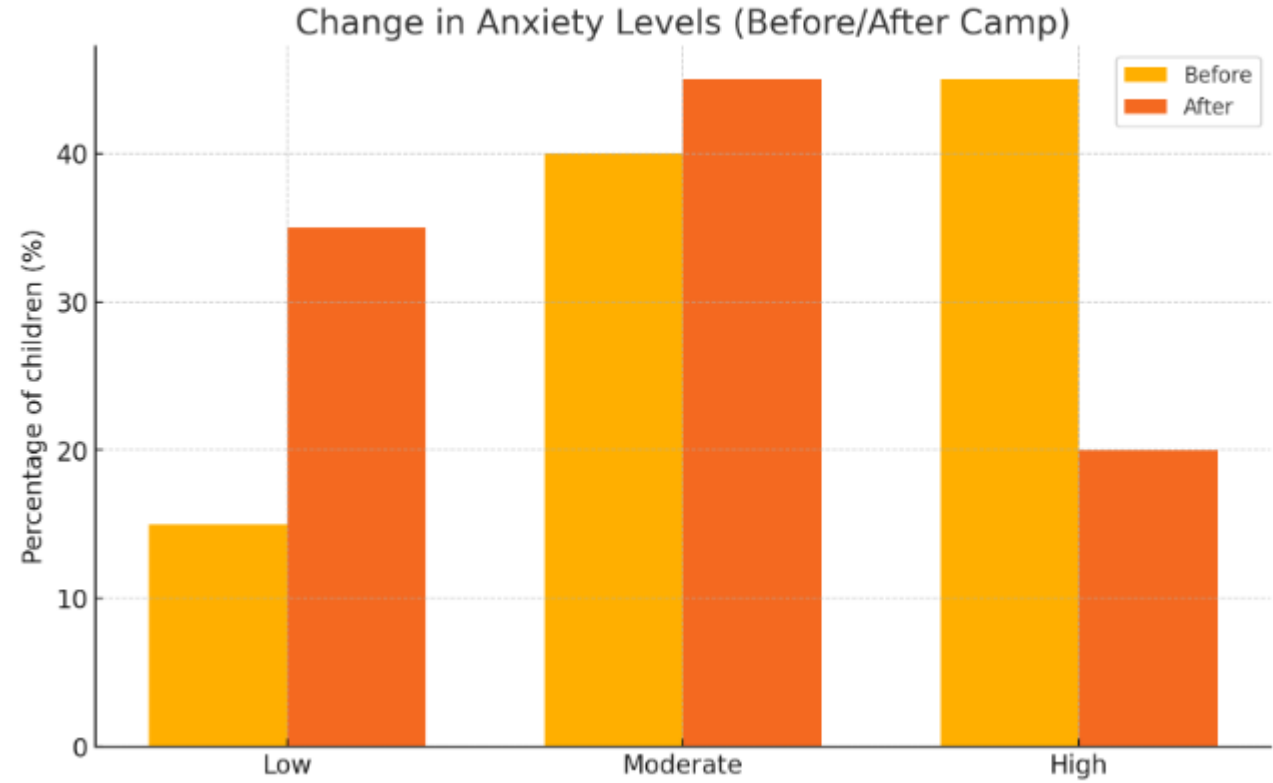
The average stress score decreased by **23%**

- **Strengthened emotional bond with the child:**

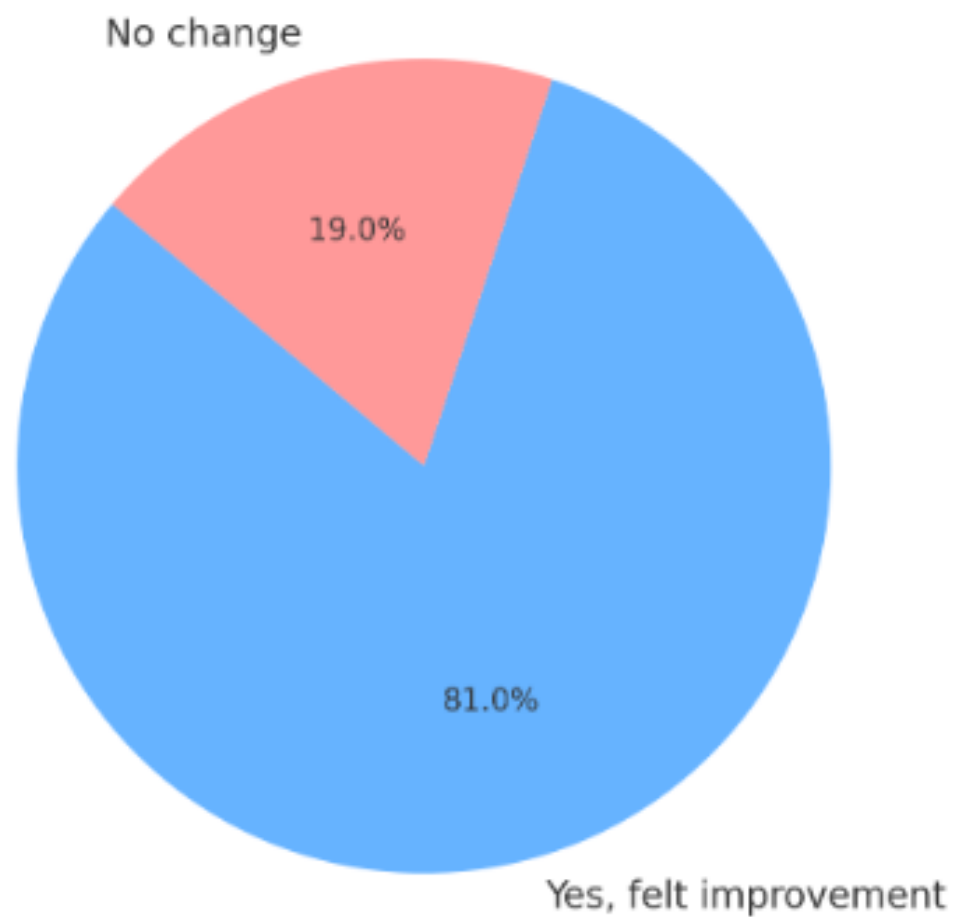
81% of parents reported better understanding of their children's emotional needs

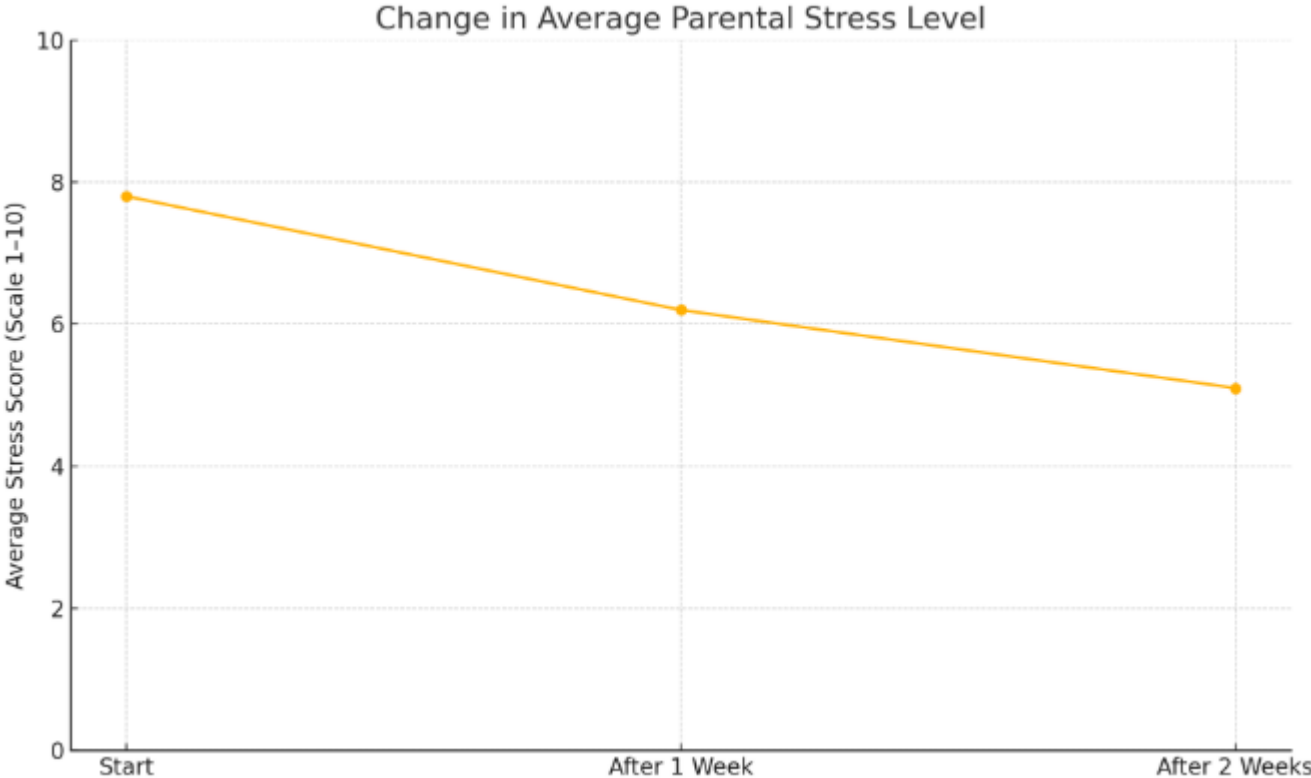
- **Sense of support and community**

87% of parents said that due to the the camp they felt less alone in facing challenges



Parents Reporting Improved Emotional Bond





Qualitative Evidence (Feedback)

"For the first time, I was able to calmly talk with my daughter about what we experienced during the occupation. Before the camp, she didn't say a single word about it."

— *Mother from Kherson region*

"My son approached other children to play for the first time in two years. He has become less irritable."

— *Father from Donetsk region*



FORMS OF PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSISTANCE:

- groups for mothers who have lost husbands or have relatives in captivity;
- individual psychological sessions for parents;
- psychoeducation and support for families raising children with signs of trauma;
- physical therapy;
- art therapy;
- communication trainings;
- psychological ^[L]_[SEP] games;
- conversations about parenting and supporting children, and many other healing practices and techniques. ^[L]_[SEP]



HOW WE WORK



WE FOLLOW A THREE-LEVEL MODEL:



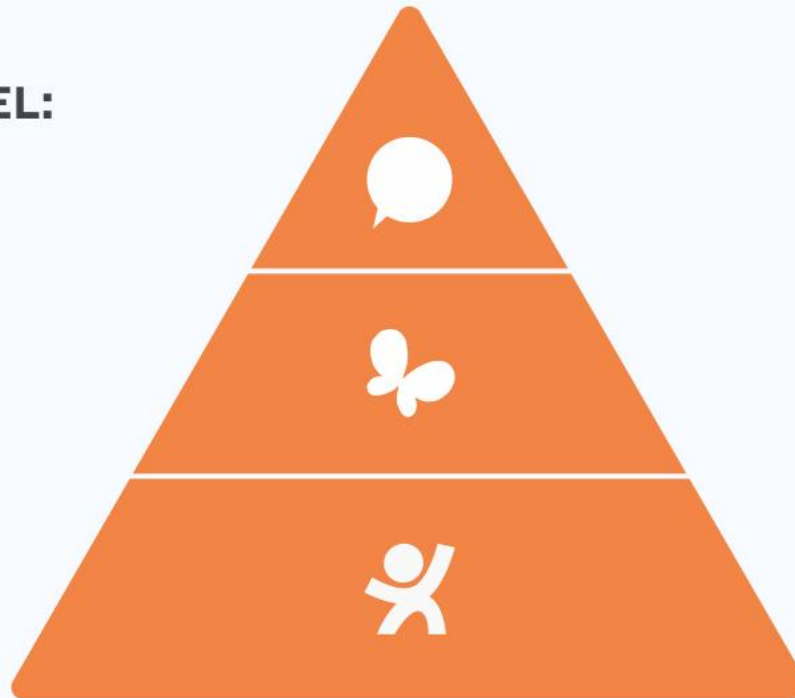
Body – stabilization of the nervous system, body-based practices, movements and breathing



Emotions – working with experiences through play, creativity, and group interaction



Thoughts – integration of traumatic experience through psychotherapy and reflection



We use scientifically based methods of psychological recovery for children with proven effectiveness: trauma-focused CBT, art and body-oriented therapy, sensory integration, EMDR, play therapy, mindfulness, and family-based approaches.

MAIN PARTS OF THE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN:



Getting Acquainted with Nature:

Children learned how to light a fire, swim in kayaks, and treat natural resources with care.

Interacting and Communicating:

The intensive includes team games, building and strengthening new connections, and training skills in accepting and providing help to others.

Recreation and Master Classes:

Children learned how to craft and decorate candles, paint beads, and work with clay.

Working with Psychologists:

We helped participants find a sense of inner strength, discussed topics such as conflict resolution and anger management, and practiced meditation and gratitude techniques.



MAIN PARTS OF THE PROGRAM FOR MOTHERS:



Psychoemotional Support

- **Psychological support groups** for parents
- A **safe space** to share and process experiences
- Working through **guilt, anxiety, and loss**
- **Emotional self-regulation** techniques
- **Body-oriented practices**
 - Breathing exercises, light movement sessions
 - Grounding and reconnecting with the body
- **Stress reduction techniques**
 - Mindfulness, art therapy
 - Drawing emotions, working with symbols
 - Keeping a gratitude journal

Supporting Parental Roles and Skills

- **Psychoeducation:** *"How war affects children and families?"*
- Understanding children's **psychology under stress**
- Recognizing signs of **trauma in children**
- Sessions to develop positive parenting skills
 - How to **listen to your child** and understand their emotions
 - Supporting a **secure emotional bond**
 - Helping children
- Working with one's own childhood experiences
 - How your own upbringing affects your parenting style?
 - Exercises: "What kind of parent do I want to be?"

Family Interaction

- **Family workshops** (together with children)
- Creating **symbolic items together** (bracelets, flags, family crests)
- Games to build **trust and cooperation**
- **Family art therapy or storytelling therapy**
 - Creating a shared family story
 - Drawing "Our Family After the War"

Other

- **Legal consultations** (as needed)
 - Restoring documents, obtaining status of people suffered from the war
- **Individual sessions with a psychologist**
 - For those in need of deeper support



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«I didn't believe that 21 days of working with psychologists could change anything. But—no. Here, they told me I don't have to hold everything in. Now we can sit down and cry together. This has changed us»,

— VIKTORIIA, PARTICIPANT IN THE
CAMP+ PROGRAM. »





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CHILDREN CANNOT WAIT FOR
THE WAR TO END TO BEGIN
THEIR HEALING.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Make your contribution to one of the areas (programs, infrastructure, training);
- provide professional expertise and resources;
- share information about us in your community;
- become a strategic partner;



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