

Study of Polish and Ukrainian Volunteers Helping War Refugees. Psychological and Motivational Conditions of Coping with Stress of Volunteer Activity

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Abstract : Objectives: The study is about the determinants of coping with stress connected with volunteer activity for Russo-Ukrainian war 2022 refugees. We examined the mental health reactions, chosen psychological traits, and motivational functions of volunteers working in Poland and Ukraine in relation to their coping with stress styles. The study was financed with funds from the Foundation for Polish Science in the framework of the FOR UKRAINE Programme. Material and Method: The study was conducted in 2022. The study was a quantitative, questionnaire-based survey. Data was collected through an online survey. The volunteers were asked to assess their propensity to use different styles of coping with stress connected with their activity for Russo-Ukrainian war refugees using The Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (Brief-COPE) questionnaire. Depression, anxiety, and stress were measured using the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress (DASS)-21 item scale. Chosen psychological traits, psychological capital and hardiness, were assessed by The Psychological Capital Questionnaire and The Norwegian Revised Scale of Hardiness (DRS-15R). Then The Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) was used. The significance of differences between the variable means of the samples was tested by the Student's t-test. We used multivariate linear regression to identify factors associated with coping with stress styles separately for each national sample. Results: The sample consisted of 720 volunteers helping war refugees (in Poland, 435 people, and 285 in Ukraine). The results of the regression analysis indicate variables that are significant predictors of the propensity to use particular styles of coping with stress (problem-focused style, emotion-focused style and avoidant coping). These include levels of depression and stress, individual psychological characteristics and motivational functions, different for Polish and Ukrainians. Ukrainian volunteers are significantly more likely to use all three coping with stress styles than Polish ones. The results also prove significant differences in the severity of anxiety, stress and depression, the selected psychological traits and motivational functions studied, which led volunteers to participate in activities for war refugees. Conclusions: The results show that depression and stress severity, as well as psychological capital and hardiness, and motivational factors are connected with coping with stress behavior. The results indicate the need for increased attention to the well-being of volunteers acting under stressful conditions. They also prove the necessity of guiding the selection of people for specific types of volu

Keywords : anxiety, coping with stress styles, depression, hardiness, mental health, motivational functions, psychological capital, resilience, stress, war, volunteer, civil society

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