



COMPETENCES AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

**FOR THE PROVISION OF QUALITY PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES
TO VULNERABLE CATEGORIES OF THE POPULATION IN THE COMMUNITIES
OF DNIPROPETROVSKA AND KYIVSKA OBLASTS**



The study was conducted among specialists who provide administrative services of the psychosocial direction in Byshivska and Sofiyivska communities

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Prepared by "Right to Protection" CF as a partner of Ukraine Response Consortium within the project "Addressing the immediate multi-sectoral humanitarian needs of IDPs and conflict-affected populations inside Ukraine".

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INTRODUCTION

This study has been conducted within the framework of the project “Addressing the immediate multi-sectoral humanitarian needs of IDPs and conflict-affected populations inside Ukraine” implemented by the Ukraine Response Consortium.

This study has been designed to **enhance the quality of psychosocial services provided** to the population of territorial communities of the Dnipropetrovska and Kyivska oblasts, as well as to **develop programs** and initiatives aimed at improving the competencies and communication skills of specialists providing psychosocial services.

SURVEY PERIOD

June 01, 2023 to June 15, 2023.

OBJECT OF THE STUDY

Competencies and communication skills required for the provision of quality public psychosocial services to vulnerable populations of territorial communities.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Specialists providing public psychosocial services in rural territorial communities.

STUDY GEOGRAPHY

Sofiyivska territorial community is a community located in the Kryvorizky district of Dnipropetrovska oblast.

Its administrative centre is the Sofiyivka urban-type settlement.

The area of the community is 668.7 km²; the population is 12 760 persons.

The community comprises 29 settlements.

As of June 01, 2023, the community hosted 825 IDPs, including 87 mobility impaired persons, 442 children (aged under 18), 385 families. The community has 2 compact living spaces for IDPs.

It is a typical territorial community that used to serve as a transit point for people seeking refuge and hosted a large number of IDPs.

Byshivska territorial community is a community located in the Fastivsky district of Kyivska oblast.

Its administrative centre is the village of Byshiv.

The area of the community is 279.7 km²; the population is 7 032 persons.

The community comprises 15 settlements governed by nine village councils.

Byshivska community is located in a formerly-occupied area. Some of the local residents have been tortured, some others were killed.

About 80 detached houses in the community were damaged, while 68 others were destroyed beyond repair. The local palace of culture, some other residential and administrative buildings, as well as a portion of municipally-owned equipment were lost to the war. Local kindergartens and the supporting educational institutions were destroyed.

The community gave shelter to refugees from other regions of the country. It currently hosts 1754 registered IDPs, including 240 IDPs with disabilities.

The community has a geriatric centre for the elderly.

The community does not employ any social workers as municipal staff.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To identify the **communication needs** of specialists providing local residents with public psychosocial counselling services;
- To identify the **issues arising in the course of communication** with vulnerable groups of people;
- To identify **obstacles that may impair the quality** of the psychosocial services provided by specialists;
- To identify the problematic categories of service recipients, i.e. those that are the hardest to interact and communicate with.

METHODOLOGY

This study has employed the following survey methods:

- open-ended surveys;
- closed-ended surveys (multiple choice, yes/no questions);
- rating surveys.

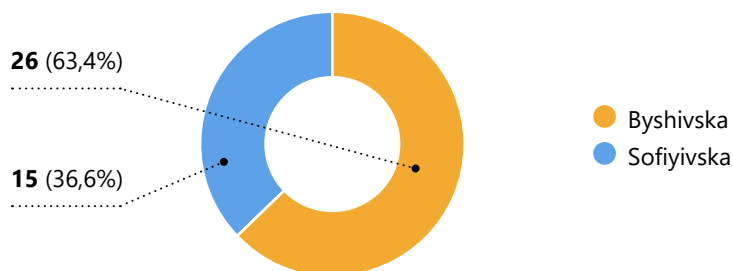
The survey has been conducted in cooperation with the project methodologist.

FINDINGS

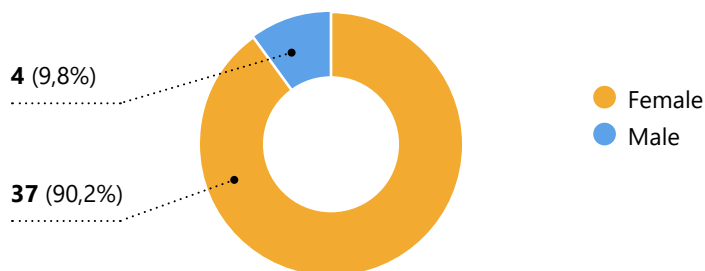
TARGET AUDIENCE CHARACTERISTICS

41 providers of public psychosocial services in rural territorial communities have been surveyed for the study.

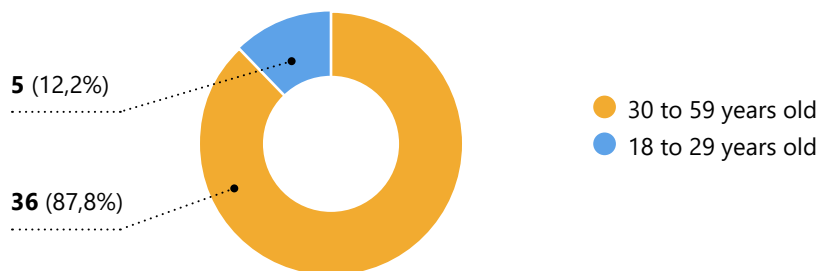
TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES OF THE RESPONDENTS



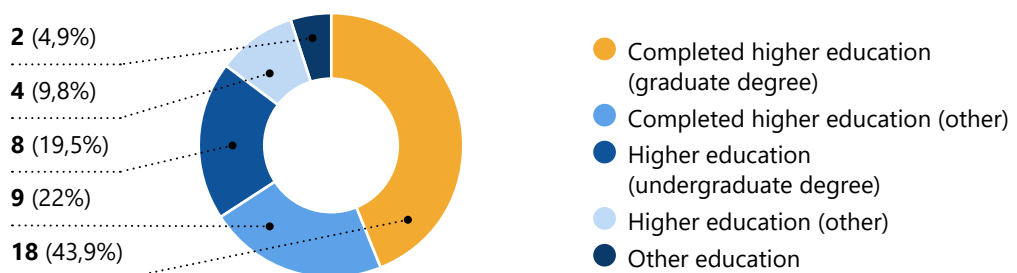
RESPONDENTS` GENDER



RESPONDENTS` AGE

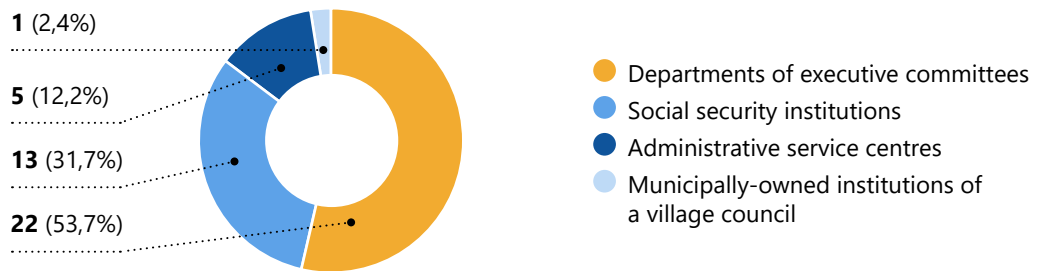


RESPONDENTS` EDUCATION

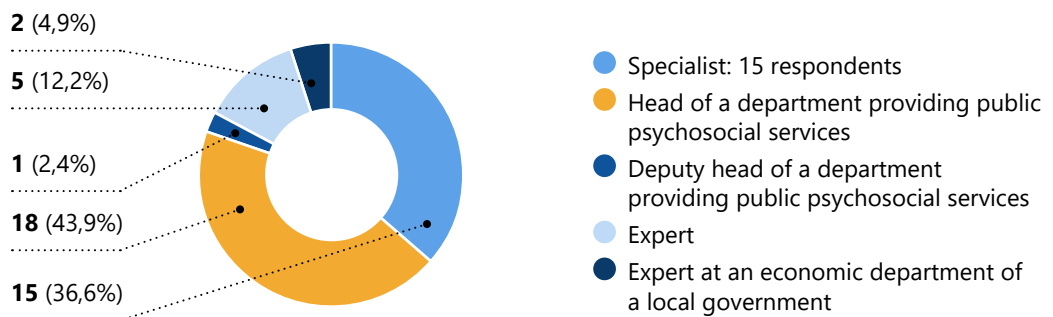


EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

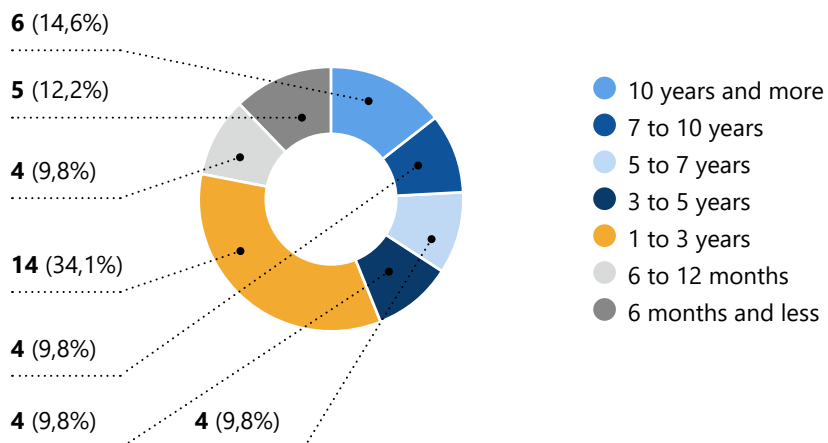
INSTITUTIONS OF EMPLOYMENT



POSITIONS HELD BY RESPONDENTS



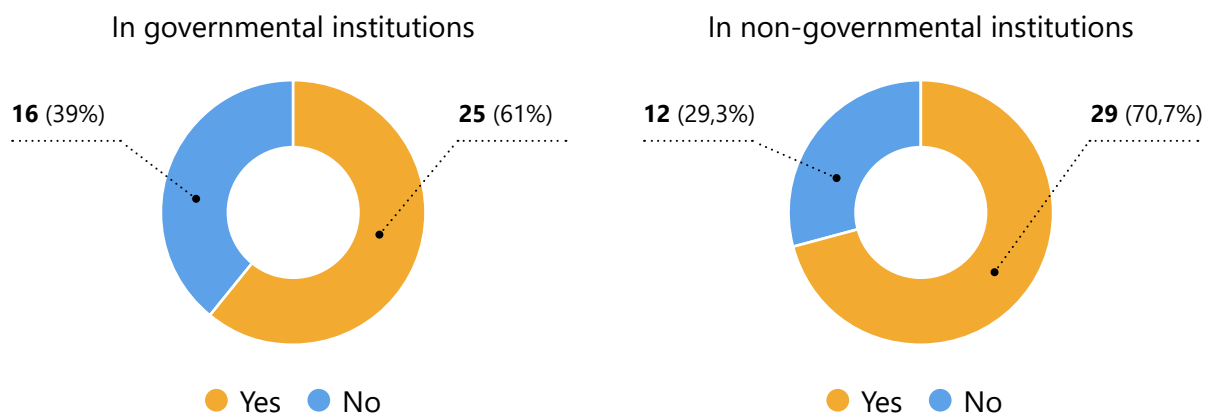
LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT



RESPONDENTS PERFORMING THE BELOW FUNCTIONS IN THE COMMUNITIES

No.	Function	Number of respondents
1	Dealing with matters concerning the provision of social services	35
2	Work with vulnerable populations	34
3	Collection and issuance of documents	32
4	Safeguarding of children's rights, keeping records of orphans, children without parental care and children in difficult circumstances, protection of children's rights in courts	30
5	Acceptance of applications (both online and offline)	26
6	Assurance of the visibility of public psychosocial services	25
7	Coordination of referrals for psychosocial services within a community	25
8	Management of activities of an executive committee	24
9	Accounting for vulnerable populations	23
10	Legal counselling	22
11	Coordination of activities of a department	20
12	Documentation of and arrangement for the provision of social services to vulnerable populations	19
13	Work with state registries	15
14	Issuance of extracts and certificates	15
15	Collection and processing of documents required for the provision of financial aid to people residing in a community	12
16	Management of activities of standing deputy commissions	11
17	Economic support and development of a community	9

REFRESHER TRAINING AT STATE INSTITUTIONS IN THE PAST 5 YEARS

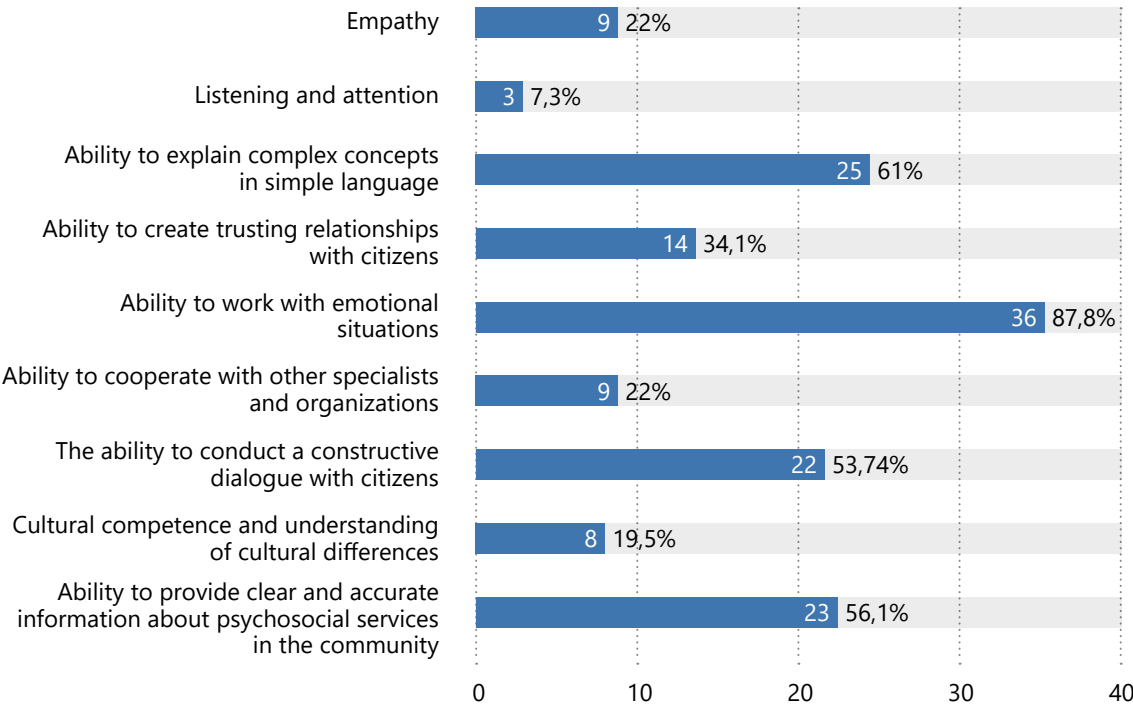


REFRESHER TRAINING AT NON-STATE INSTITUTIONS IN THE PAST 5 YEARS

Population group	Self-assessment of skill of dealing with a particular group				
	1	2	3	4	5
IDPs	8	6	6	15	6
Persons ineligible for a pension	12	7	7	9	6
Parents (or other persons) evading parental responsibility	12	6	11	6	6
Low-income families	8	9	5	12	7
Single parents	8	8	6	10	9
Persons released from prison	15	10	9	2	5
Orphaned children	11	6	10	7	7
Orphaned adults	13	4	9	8	7
Elderly persons	6	9	4	13	9
War veterans	12	8	9	7	5
Military personnel	11	10	8	8	4
Family members of war veterans	12	7	5	12	5
Families of war veterans killed in action	14	7	7	8	5
Families of war veterans missing in action	15	10	7	7	2
Persons with war-related disabilities	16	7	9	6	3
Former prisoners of war	19	9	8	3	2
Families of prisoners of war	18	9	7	5	2

STUDY OF COMPETENCIES AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THE PROVISION OF QUALITY PUBLIC PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES IN COMMUNITIES

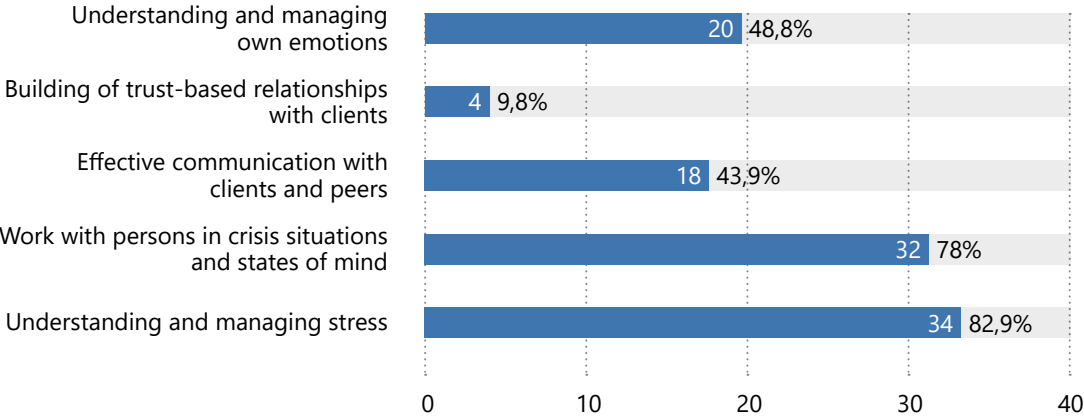
WHICH COMMUNICATION SKILLS EMPLOYED IN THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES WOULD YOU LIKE TO IMPROVE?



The most in-demand communication skills were the following:

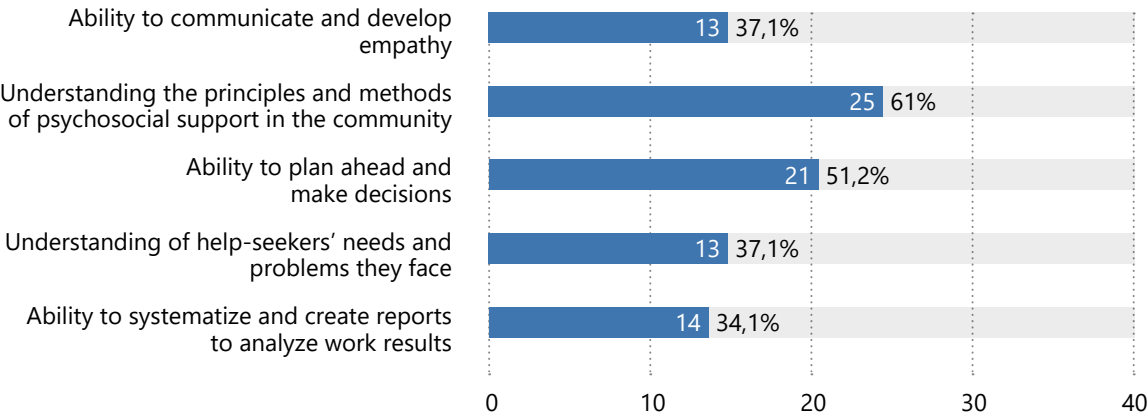
- Ability to handle emotional situations
- Ability to explain complex concepts in simple terms
- Ability to provide clear and accurate information on psychosocial services available in the community
- Ability to engage in constructive dialogue

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING COMPETENCIES RELATED TO PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES YOU NEED TO ACQUIRE IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF SERVICES YOU PROVIDE?



The survey data show the respondents' need to improve their competencies to deal with people in crisis situations and manage stress.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING COMPETENCIES RELATED TO PUBLIC SERVICES WOULD HELP YOU THE MOST IN YOUR WORK?



Most of the respondents need to understand the principles and methods of the provision of psychosocial support in the community.

CONCLUSIONS

The ongoing war in Ukraine caused significant changes in populations receiving public services. The number of people belonging to vulnerable categories (including military personnel, persons with war-related disabilities, prisoners of war, families of prisoners of war, families of war veterans killed in action, IDPs, survivors of occupation, etc.) has increased drastically.

These changes require providers of public psychosocial services working in communities to have skills needed for interaction with such populations. The lack of such skills causes social tension, deterioration of services provided and rapid development of occupational burnout in the specialists.

The study of competencies and communication skills of specialists providing psychosocial services in rural communities has shown that there are:

- lack of competencies in the provision of psychosocial support to vulnerable populations;
- lack of skills and abilities to deal with difficult and stressful situations when working with such clients;
- low competence in preventing and mitigating occupational burnout.

In order to be able to provide quality psychosocial services to populations of rural territorial communities, specialists of departments providing such services need to acquire and improve the following skills and competencies:

- ability to communicate with persons in crisis situations and states of mind;
- awareness of the specifics of dealing with military personnel, persons with war-related disabilities, former war prisoners, families of war prisoners, families of war veterans killed in action, etc.;
- ability to manage conflicts;
- stress management techniques;
- practical skills of emotional coping and self-help.

Upon conducting this study and analysing experiences of mental health professionals from the Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute (Canada, Trauma-Informed Care) and the International Network for Aid, Relief and Assistance (providing access to psychological aid to vulnerable populations, including war veterans, refugees and survivors of human trafficking, using innovative methods and protocols for psychological recovery and support), the following conclusions can be drawn:

In the situation of the current war, Ukraine's territorial communities need professionals with developed **competencies and communication skills required to provide quality public psychosocial services**.

Effective communication skills are key for specialists working in communities: they allow to understand clients' needs, establish trust and emotional connection, which is essential for providing quality support and aid.

Currently, all organizations providing social services in Ukraine face the consequences of the war and trauma caused by it. This new reality requires new approaches to communication with clients. Provision of aid in our communities must become compassionate and trauma-informed. Integration of trauma awareness in organizational culture improves the quality of services and can contribute to healing, recovery and return to normal life. Active implementation of such principles as respect, compassion and cooperation can contribute to faster recovery from war trauma.

In response to such needs identified in communities, the R2P Mental Health Care Service has developed a 12-hour training program for specialists providing public psychosocial services, titled Basic Principles of Communication in Communities with Vulnerable Populations in Times of War. It is aimed at facilitating development of skills and competencies needed to introduce trauma awareness and trauma-informed care into social services provided in communities.