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The problem of loneliness and stress coping styles among war refugees in the context of their life experience (based on a study conducted in Drohobych)

SUMMARY

This article presents the findings of an empirical study of the feeling of loneliness experienced by war refugees relocated to Drohobych, and the stress coping styles they use.

The study included a theoretical analysis of available materials on the issue of loneliness and stress coping styles. The conducted analysis has shown that the problem of loneliness is widely described and interpreted from different aspects in literature on psychology. According to the sources, the problem is complex and there is no unambiguous solution to it. The phenomenon of loneliness is examined from the standpoint of numerous conceptual approaches. However, there is rather little research into the subject of loneliness experienced by war refugees in Ukraine and its connection with the stress coping styles they use.

The aim of the study was to identify the specific manifestations of loneliness, in particular its three aspects: the social, emotional, and existential ones, and also its relationship with the stress coping styles used by forced migrants living in the territory of Drohobych and the Drohobych district.

The above phenomena were analysed using the following psychodiagnostic tools: a short scale for measuring loneliness (SBS-AD), developed by Z. Dołęga; the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS), developed by N. S. Endler and J. D.A. Parker, in the Polish adaptation of P. Shchepanik, Ya. Strelau, and K. Wrzeshnevsky (P. Szczepanik, J. Strelau, K. Wrześniewski); an original questionnaire, specifically developed for the needs of the research.

The findings of the study of the theoretical and methodological aspects of the issue and the conducted empirical research have confirmed the hypothesis that loneliness experienced by war refugees has an existential face and is related to their stress coping styles. It has been found that the task-oriented style dominates among war refugees. The research has shown that the problem of loneliness and the related stress coping styles requires further study, while the research findings should be implemented in the provision of psychological help to war refugees.

Key words: forced migration, loneliness, stress, war refugees, internally displaced persons.

Introduction

For contemporary Ukraine, the problem of war refugees has been exceptionally relevant since 2014, when the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, its armed aggression and the start of hostilities in the east of the country caused a surge in forced migration among the Ukrainian population. With the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the forced migration of Ukrainians, who had no other choice but leave their homes in order to save their lives, and integrate into other communities, reached an even more massive scale and affected not only Ukraine, but also most countries in Europe and on other continents.

People who migrated within the borders of Ukraine are called internally displaced persons, displaced persons, and so on. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are considered to be people who were forced to leave their permanent places of residence for the purpose of preserving their own life and health, avoiding the consequences of an armed confrontation, a situation of violence, violations of human rights, natural disasters or man-made emergencies, but did not cross the internationally recognized state border of Ukraine.

Stressed out due to the experienced traumatic events, forced migrants find themselves in a situation of conflict between the values, customs and traditions of the environment they left and the new, accepting environment in which they will have to adapt, live, work, communicate, and interact. For this reason, forced resettlement causes severe shock and stress, affects people's health, contributes to the emergence of depression, high tension, anxiety and fear, aggravation of the feelings of loneliness, personal worthlessness, loss of identity, and alienation from others. A number of studies show that people who have been forcibly resettled face significant challenges in social and psychological adaptation, and have difficulty in interpersonal relationships¹.

The consequences of forced migration are influenced by a number of psychological, socio-cultural, economic and other factors, which are diverse and give rise to a large number of problems. Serious problems of a psychological nature include the problems of adaptation, self-identification, the choice of stress coping strategies, and the problem of loneliness.

Scholars researching these problems believe that the challenges faced by internally displaced persons during adaptation are associated, among other things, with acculturation stress, which is interpreted as a state of anxiety experienced by a migrant, caused by the lack of guidance for actions and the absence or insufficient knowledge of actions they are expected to take in the unfamiliar surroundings².

Researchers of psychological factors that contribute to the development of distress

¹ Т. Б. Іванова, Психологічні наслідки вимушеної міграції для внутрішньо переміщених осіб / Іванова Тетяна Борисівна // Психологічні читання: зб. матеріалів ІХ наук.-практ. конф. молод. вчених (м. Харків, 1 груд. 2023 р.): у 2-х т. / МВС України, Харків. нац. ун-т внутр. справ, Каф. соц. та психол., Наук. парк «Наука та безпека». Харків: ХНУВС, 2023. Т. 1. С. 94–96.

² G. Roysircar-Sodowsky, M. V. Maestas, *Acculturation, ethnic identity, and acculturative stress: Evidence and measurement* [in:] *Handbook of crosscultural and multicultural personality assessment*, ed. R. H. Dana, Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2000, p. 131-172; J. W. Berry, D. L. Sam, *Immigrant Youth: Acculturation, Identity, and Adaptation*, "Appled Psychology" 2006, p. 303–332, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2006.00256.x>.

in forced migrants³ have found that certain personal characteristics such as low self-esteem, introversion, dependence on other people, lack of self-sufficiency, negativism, and cruelty increase the level of distress.

In addition, the cultural diversity of the host society, its geographical distance from their home town or village, and acculturation policy contribute to the intensity of distress experienced by relocated persons, which causes them to suffer from acculturation stress and homesickness⁴.

Relocation to another territory always involves the loss of the habitual way of life and a transition to the unknown, which necessitates adaptation to a different socio-cultural environment, correlation of oneself with the new community, territory, ethnic group, nation, state and, accordingly, raises the issue of self-identification⁵. In addition, there is usually a loss or significant reduction in usual interpersonal relationships, which can lead to the feeling of loneliness.

According to available research, people who experience a feeling of loneliness and suffer from it can develop depressive states and changes in the psyche. They experience a wide range of negative emotions such as longing, sadness, a void, anxiety, and self-doubt; they feel worthless and think that no one loves, understands, supports or is willing to help them. Moreover, it is themselves whom they usually blame for this state of things.

The feeling of loneliness is caused by a situation of uncertainty, failure to meet their basic human needs, fear of the unknown, and longing for the things lost. What exacerbates the problem is that people suffering from loneliness often isolate themselves from others, are unwilling to adapt to new living conditions, and lock themselves inside a closed circle of negative emotional experiences that they are unable to cope with on their own. In this case, the feeling of loneliness can turn into a stable mental state, which manifests itself in a feeling of total self-alienation and can provoke mental disorders and social maladjustment of the individual. When a person finds himself or herself in such a situation, he or she needs urgent social and psychological help.

As of today, the concept of loneliness as a complex psychological phenomenon is multifaceted, ambiguous and complicated. This makes its study a challenging task. On the one hand, loneliness is a global, essential, socially determined phenomenon that does not have clear-cut criteria; on the other hand, it is a factor of a complex mental experience that reaches the depths of human consciousness. This causes the complexity of building a relevant scientific theory. The phenomenon of loneliness and its link to stress is widely presented in scholarly literature; however, even though it is extremely serious, this problem has not been sufficiently researched in the context of war refugees and therefore requires immediate in-depth study.

³ L. Benn, J.E. Harvey, P. Gilbert, C. Irons, *Social rank, interpersonal trust and recall of parental rearing in relation to homesickness*, Pers. Individ. Diff. 2005, Vol. 38, p. 1813–1822, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2004.11.010>.

⁴ I. Jasinskaja-Lahti, K. Liebkind, G. Horenczyk, P. Schmitz, *The interactive nature of acculturation: perceived discrimination, acculturation attitudes and stress among young ethnic repatriates in Finland, Israel, and Germany*. Int J Intercult Relat. 2003. Vol. 27(1), P. 79-97. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(02\)00061-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(02)00061-5).

⁵ Д. Гьокхан, *Сучасні міграційні процеси: проблема адаптації та інтеграції мігрантів в об'єднаній Європі*. Філософські науки. Вісник Житомирського державного ун-ту ім. І. Франка. Випуск 1 (82). 2016. С. 35–44.

Research Methodology

The research presented in this article was carried out from November 2023 to March 2024 as part of the Face of Stress and Loneliness in the Context of Military Migration project, financed from the state budget funds allocated by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Poland within the framework of the Science for Society II programme, which is the first international research initiative of its kind. The project team includes 10 women scholars from four universities: two universities located in the Republic of Poland and two – in Ukraine, namely Witelon Collegium State University (Collegium Witelona Uczelnia Państwowa, Legnica), Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Academy of Krakow (Krakowska Akademia im. Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego), Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University (Дрогобицький державний педагогічний університет імені Івана Франка), and Rivne State University of Humanities (Рівненський державний гуманітарний університет). Consultation support has been provided to the researchers by Dr. Zofia Dołęga, a professor at SWPS University, a psychologist specializing in scholarly research and research work on the issues of loss, mental loneliness, incomplete and complicated grieving experience, post-traumatic stress, as well as risk factors for emotional, social and communicative disorders in childhood and adolescence.

The project envisaged conducting research among the Ukrainian communities of forced migrants in Legnica and Krakow (Poland) and internally displaced persons living in Drohobych and Rivne (Ukraine). The aim of the study was to gain an insight into the feeling of loneliness experienced by war refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as the stress coping strategies used by them.

An important objective was to identify and characterize the correlations between the feeling of global loneliness and its three aspects – emotional, social and existential, as well as the strategies for coping with stress in the conditions of difficult life situations and adaptive changes, which can have long-term and far-reaching socio-economic consequences for further psychosocial functioning of a person in various areas of life.

The study was conducted using the following psychodiagnostic tools:

1. A short scale for measuring loneliness (SBS-AD) developed by Z. Dołęga⁶.

The scale consists of three parts, containing a total of 31 questions. Similarly to the original SBS scale, it is based on the concept of psychological loneliness, in which each aspect of this phenomenon is characterized by specific features and certain consequences for an individual. The general indicator of loneliness (global loneliness) shows the degree of global loneliness, which is understood as a psychological meta-variable that includes three scales.

The first scale is social loneliness (SBS/sp), which is characterized by the lack of satisfaction with one's social network and the feeling of marginalization from the social environment. The second scale is emotional loneliness (SBS/se). Emotional loneliness means believing that you are worthless and unattractive in relationships, especially with significant others. The third scale is existential loneliness (SBS/seg). Existential loneliness is characterized by not seeing any meaning or coherence of life, and a lack of a system of social values.

Respondents filling in the questionnaire have the following options on the scale to choose

⁶ Z. Dołęga, *Biedy i bogactwo samotności. Studium psychologiczne*, Wyd. Difin SA, Warszawa 2020, s. 257–274. Skalę Badania Samotności wśród Dorosłych wykorzystano w projekcie za zgodą autorki skali.

from: “Completely agree”, “Rather agree”, “Rather disagree”, “Strongly disagree.” Responses are evaluated according to the SBS key on a scale from 1 to 4 points or, on the reverse scale, from 4 to 1 point.

2. The Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS), developed by N.S. Endler and J.D.A. Parker, in the Polish adaptation of P. Shchepanik, Ya. Strelau, and K. Wrzesniewski (P. Szczepanik, J. Strelau, K. Wrześniewski)⁷.

The CISS questionnaire consists of 48 questions related to different behaviour patterns of people who have found themselves in a stressful situation. The purpose of the questionnaire is to identify strategies used by respondents to cope with difficult (stressful) situations. There are the following stress coping strategies:

Task-oriented coping strategy (a strategy by applying which a person seeks to use personal resources to find possible ways to effectively solve the problem);

Emotion-focused coping strategy (a strategy related to the emergence of negative emotions related to the situation, and focusing on such emotions);

Avoidance-oriented coping strategy (a strategy by using which a person seeks to avoid contact with the outside world, thus displacing the need to solve the problem);

Distraction (a strategy that involves distraction to other types of activities that make it possible to forget about the problem);

Social distraction (a strategy using which a person turns to the surrounding people – family, friends, colleagues – for help and support in order to effectively solve the problem).

Each respondent receives a form and the following instructions: “Below are the possible reactions of a person to various difficult, sad, or stressful situations. Indicate how often you behave in this way in a difficult stressful situation: “Never”, “Rarely”, “Occasionally”, “More often than not” or “Very often.”

The points are summed up using the key, and the relevant stress coping strategies are identified from among the task-oriented, emotion-focused, avoidance-oriented coping strategies and the two sub-styles of the latter: engaging in compensatory (alternative) activities and looking for social contacts.

3. An original questionnaire, which was developed specifically for the needs of the study. The questionnaire consists of 26 questions, the answers to which made it possible to collect a large amount of information about the selected factors – socio-demographic features characterizing the respondents, such as age, gender, education, employment and marital status, and others, which will be presented in the respondent profile below.

Respondent Profile

The research sample consisted of 299 people – forced migrants currently living in the city of Drohobych. Based on the answers to the questions of the original questionnaire, we drew up the profile of the respondents according to their socio-demographic characteristics. Fig. 1 shows the distribution of respondents by gender. One person did not answer the question. Of the remaining 298 people, 227 are women. They make up 76.2% of the sample, while the share of men is 23.8%.

⁷ J. Strelau, A. Jaworowska, *CISS Kwestionariusz Radzenia Sobie w Sytuacjach Stresowych. Wydanie czwarte, podręcznik do wersji polskiej*, 2020. Na potrzeby badań prowadzonych w projekcie zakupiono komplet materiałów składający się z: podręcznika, klucza, kwestionariuszy.

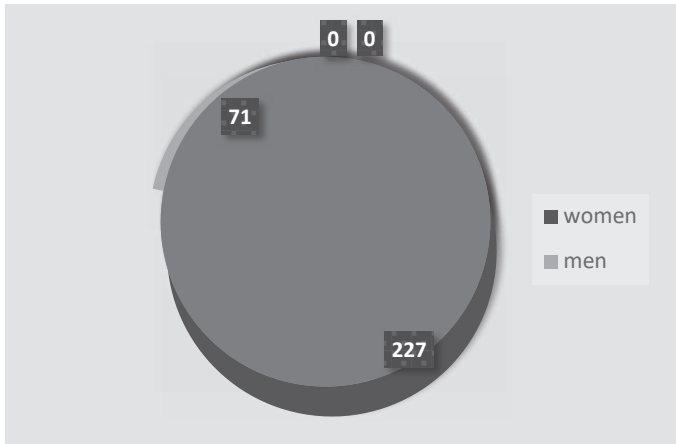


Fig. 1. Distribution of the respondents by gender

As regards the age range, the largest share of the entire sample ($n=299$) accounts for respondents aged 61 to 70 years (63 people, or 21.1%) and over 70 years (58 people, or 19.4%, respectively). Respondents aged 50 or older accounted for 56.6% of the sample.

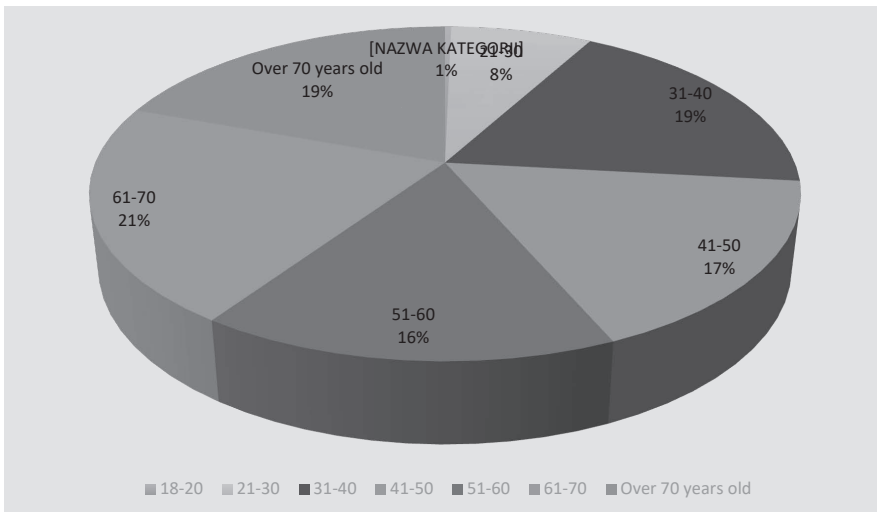


Fig. 2. Distribution of the respondents by age

Among the women taking part in the survey, the largest share includes women aged 61 to 70 years (75 people, or 22.5%) and women aged 31 to 40 years (64 people, or 19.8%). Among men, the largest group of respondents is made up of those aged 70 years or older (25.4%) and 51–60 years (23.9%). The distribution of the respondents by age is shown in Fig. 2.

The next question of the questionnaire enquired the respondents about their education. One respondent did not answer the question. Most of the remaining 298 respondents hold certificates of secondary comprehensive or secondary vocational education (147 people, which

is almost 50% of the respondents), and 64.8% of the sample are people without a university degree.

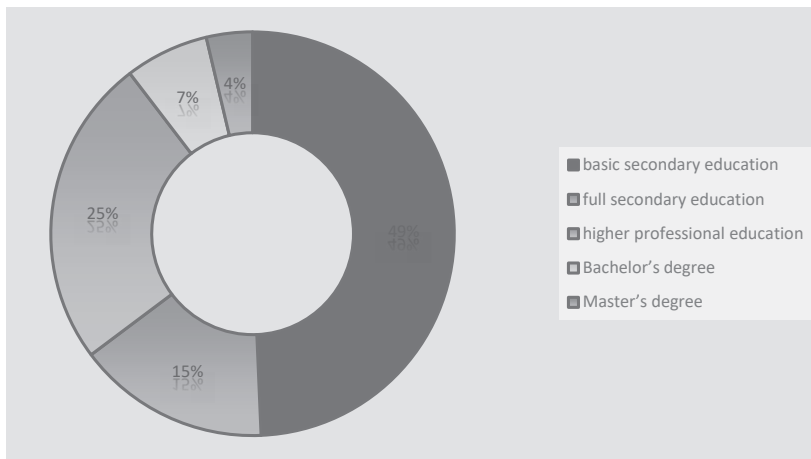


Fig. 3 Education of the respondents

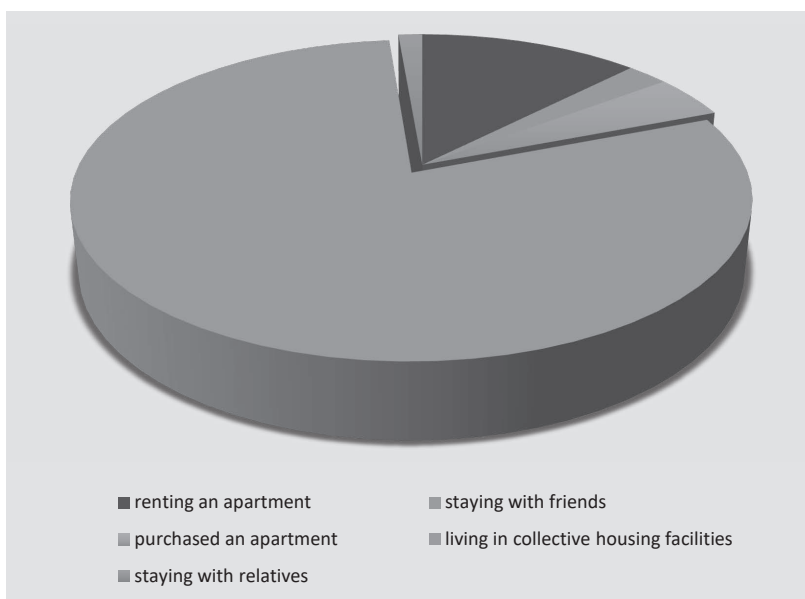


Fig. 4. Current accommodation of the respondents

One person did not answer the question about his or her current place of residence. Of the remaining 298 respondents, almost 80% (237 people) live in collective housing facilities, 12.4% (37 people) rent apartments, and 13 people have purchased apartments, 7 staying with friends, 4 staying with relatives.

Information about the respondents' current accommodation is shown in Fig. 4.

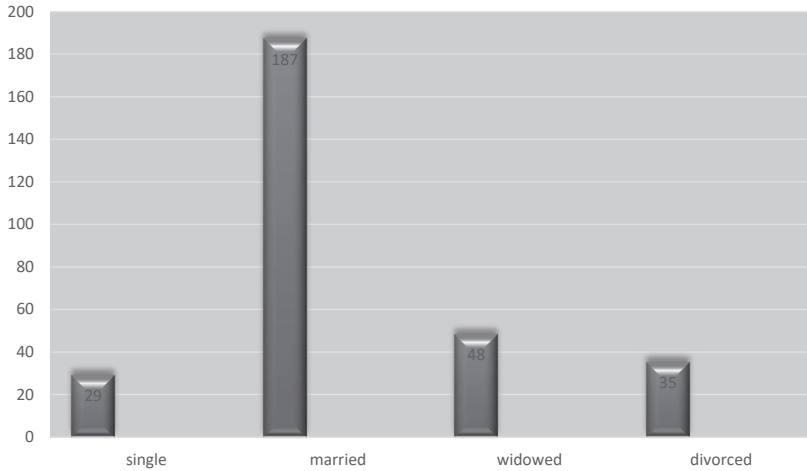


Fig. 5. Marital status of the respondents

As regards the marital status of the people from the sample group, the largest share is represented by married people – more than 60% of the respondents (187 people) (see Fig. 5).

Further the respondents were asked about their current employment status. One person did not answer the question. Among the remaining 298 respondents, retired people predominate – 40.6% of the respondents (121 people). The next largest group includes the unemployed who are looking for work – 25.5% (76 people). Currently employed people account for a little more than 1/4 of the respondents.

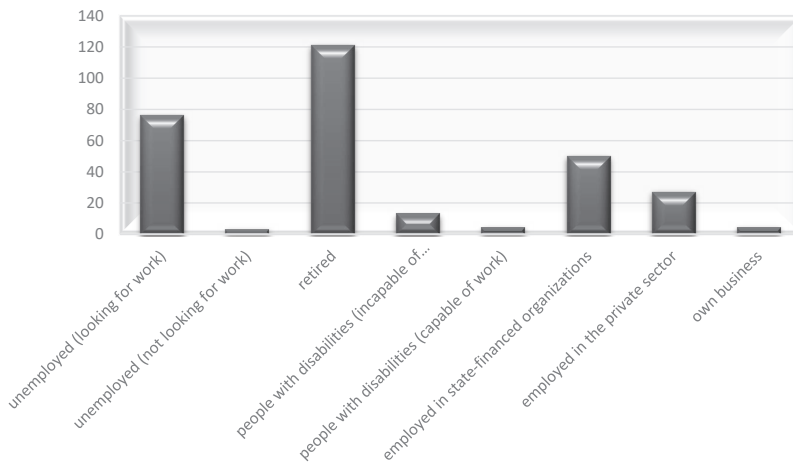


Fig. 6. Current employment status of the respondents

The distribution of the respondents by employment status is shown in Fig. 6.

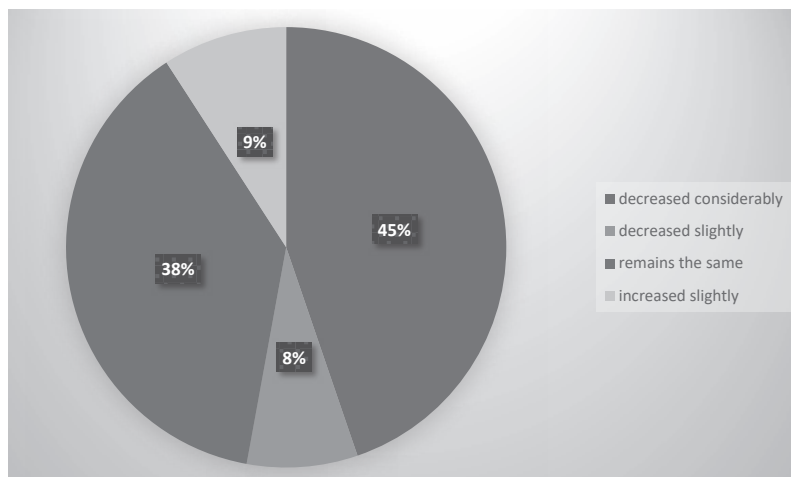


Fig. 7. Changes in the respondents' income

As regards changes in their income since the beginning of the war, four people did not answer the corresponding question. Among the remaining 295 people, the largest share accounts for those who have suffered a significant decrease in income (44.7%), while 38% currently receive the same income as they did before the war. 27 people (9.2% of the sample) reported a slight growth of their income (Fig. 7).

Further the respondents were asked about their knowledge of foreign languages other than Russian. One person did not answer this question. Of the remaining 298 people, only 15.1% speak a foreign language other than Russian.

The next question of the questionnaire concerned the time of the respondents' arrival at their current place of residence. Two persons did not answer the question. 86.9% (258 people) of the remaining 297 respondents reported that they arrived at their current place of residence in 2022.

When asked about the loss of life or health by a family member as a result of the war, 251 people answered in the negative, which is 83.9% of the total sample.

Based on the survey findings, we made a statistical analysis of the variables under study – the feeling of loneliness and stress coping styles, the quantitative results and interpretation of which are presented below.

Statistical Analysis of the Feeling of Loneliness and Stress Coping Styles

The quantitative analysis of the research findings was performed using statistical data processing methods with the application of SPSS 29.0 for Windows OS.

The analysis has shown that the average level of global loneliness is 80.88 points, with the minimum value of 37 points and the maximum value of 121 points. The standard deviation is 13.71. The findings indicate that the respondents differ in their level of global loneliness.

Below we will analyze how socio-demographic and socio-economic variables correlate with the feeling of loneliness.

To identify the correlation between the level of loneliness and the gender of respondents, the research team conducted the Mann-Whitney test for independent samples. The testing

showed no difference between the level of global loneliness and its three aspects experienced by men and by women.

It should be noted that gender differences in experiencing loneliness have been repeatedly studied by scholars. The findings of the studies, however, are rather contradictory. For instance, several studies found no differences in the intensity of global loneliness and its three aspects felt by men and women (Archibald, Bartholomew, & Marx, 1995; Berg, & Peplau, 1982)⁸, while others found that men were more likely to feel lonely than women (Avery, 1982; Booth, 1983; Russell et al., 1986; Solano, Batten, & Parish, 1986). The data on the gender characteristics of experiencing loneliness, obtained by S. Borys and D. Perlman as a result of their independent studies conducted in 1985 with the use of several different research approaches and methods, differed⁹.

It can be assumed that the research tools we used in this study are not valid for identifying gender differences in experiencing loneliness.

The relationship between loneliness and age was tested using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. The testing, however, did not find any correlation between the age of the respondents and their feelings of loneliness. Neither was identified any dependence of loneliness intensity on the level of education, which was also tested using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. These results may be due to the fact that the majority of the respondents are middle-aged and elderly people.

The Kruskal-Wallis test for independent samples was used to assess the plausibility of the hypothesis that war refugees' current place of residence affects their level of loneliness.

The "Purchased an apartment" option was excluded from the analysis, since it was chosen by only four people from the sample. One person did not answer the question. The respondents who chose the "Staying with friends" response (13 persons) and the "Staying with relatives" option (7 persons) were combined into one group with a total number of 20 persons.

Based on the findings of the test, we can state the absence of statistically significant differences in the level of loneliness between the corresponding groups of respondents. Thus, our study has shown that the place of residence does not determine the level of loneliness.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted for independent samples to test whether the war refugees' marital status affects their loneliness intensity. The obtained findings give grounds to conclude that there are no statistically significant differences in loneliness intensity between the groups of single, married, divorced or widowed respondents. Thus the level of loneliness cannot be differentiated on the basis of the marital status of war refugees.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was also used for independent samples to test whether there is any correlation between the current employment status of the respondents and their loneliness intensity.

One person did not answer the question about his or her employment status. Since the "Unemployed (not looking for work)" option was selected by three people only,

⁸ F. S. Archibald, K. Bartholomew, R. Marx, *Loneliness in early adolescence: A test of the cognitive discrepancy model of loneliness* [Electronic version], "Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin" 1995, 21, 296–301; J. H. Berg, L. A. Peplau, *Loneliness: The relationship of self-disclosure and androgyny*, "Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin" 1982, 8, 624–630.

⁹ S. Borys, D. Perlman, *Gender differences in loneliness*, "Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin" 1985, 11, 63–74.

the “Employed person with disabilities” option – by four people, and the “Own business” option – by four people, these responses were excluded from the analysis.

The fact that the findings of the tests have shown no statistically significant differences between the employment groups in terms of loneliness intensity suggests that the employment status does not have a decisive effect on the level of loneliness felt by war refugees.

The correlation between loneliness intensity and changes in income was tested using Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient.

Only one correlation has been found to be statistically significant – the link between changes in income and the feeling of social loneliness. This correlation is positive: the feeling of existential loneliness becomes more intense as income increases, although the relationship is weak.

The correlation between changes in income and loneliness intensity is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlation between changes in income and the loneliness aspect

		Changes in income
Feeling of global loneliness	<i>rho</i>	0.056
	<i>p</i>	0.339
Feeling of social loneliness	<i>rho</i>	0.163
	<i>p</i>	0.005
Feeling of emotional loneliness	<i>rho</i>	0.025
	<i>p</i>	0.672
Feeling of existential loneliness	<i>rho</i>	-0.029
	<i>p</i>	0.616

Social loneliness is a deep feeling of a break with the social environment which the individual is part of; it is accompanied by a lack of relationships, especially intimacy and closeness, for which every individual, being a social being, has an undeniable need.

The link between the income level and social loneliness can probably be explained by the fact that collective housing facilities are normally inhabited by war refugees with mostly low incomes, so any increase in a person’s income leads to certain alienation on the part of the other residents, possibly due to envy. Another factor that causes social isolation is poverty. On the other hand, the physical presence of refugees with higher incomes in the same housing facility induces internal tension, as a result of which a hostile social climate is created which excludes intimacy and promotes the emergence and development of a feeling of loneliness.

The Mann-Whitney U-tests were performed for independent samples to find out whether the level of loneliness depends on the person’s knowledge of a foreign language (except for Russian).

One respondent did not answer this question, so this finding was excluded from the analysis. The study has shown that the knowledge of a foreign language, except for Russian, is not a determining factor for the level of global loneliness or its aspects.

Also, the Mann-Whitney test was used for independent samples to test whether the level of loneliness experienced by war refugees was differentiated by the year of their arrival at the current place of residence.

Responses in which respondents did not answer this question were excluded (2 responses).

No statistically significant differences were observed. The conclusion is that the year of arrival at the current place of residence does not differentiate the feeling of loneliness experienced by war refugees.

The next stage of the study was an analysis of how socio-demographic and socio-economic variables correlated with the stress coping styles.

To identify gender differences in the choice of stress coping styles, the Mann-Whitney test was used for independent samples. However, no gender differences were found in the choice of stress coping styles by the respondents.

Similarly, the research carried out using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient found no link between the stress coping styles used by war refugees and their age or education.

The Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted for independent samples to find out whether the current place of residence influenced, to any degree, the choice of the stress coping styles by war refugees.

Only four people from the sample chose the "Purchased an apartment" option, therefore this response was excluded from the analysis. One person did not give any answer to the question. The responses "Staying with friends" (13 people) and "Staying with relatives" (7 people) were combined into one group with a total of 20 responses.

Statistically significant differences between the groups of responses occur in the case of the emotion-focused coping style (SSE) – a weak effect, and the engaging in compensatory (alternative) activities (ACZ) style – a weak effect. An in-depth ex post-facto analysis adjusted for multiple comparisons revealed certain differences between individual groups of respondents:

1) Differences between individual groups were revealed regarding the use of the emotion-focused style:

- between the group living in collective housing facilities (Me=46.00, IQR=11.00) and the group living in rented apartments (Me=51.00, IQR=10.00). A greater intensity of the emotion-focused coping style was found in people living in rented apartments ($p=0.016$);
- between the group living in collective housing facilities (Me=46.00, IQR=11.00) and the group staying with family or friends (Me=54.00, IQR=9.75). It turned out that people staying with family or friends have a greater intensity of emotion-focused style ($p=0.006$).

Thus we can see that the intensity of the emotion-focused style is higher in the case of people living in rented apartments or staying with family or friends in comparison with those living in collective housing facilities.

2) Differences between individual groups in terms of engagement in compensatory (alternative) activities:

- between the group of respondents living in collective housing facilities (Me=18.00, IQR=7.00) and the group of refugees staying with family or friends (Me=19.50, IQR=3.00). A higher intensity of engaging in compensatory (alternative) activities is characteristic of people staying with their family or friends ($p=0.024$).

The Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted for independent samples to check whether there is any correlation between the marital status of refugees and the stress coping styles they use.

The obtained findings give grounds to conclude that there are no statistically significant differences between the groups of respondents with different marital status in terms of stress

coping styles. We can state that the marital status does not affect the choice or intensity of the stress coping styles.

The Kruskal-Wallis tests were also conducted to find out whether there is any correlation between the current employment status of the respondents and their coping styles.

One person did not answer the question about his or her employment status. Since the “Unemployed (not looking for work)” option was selected by three people, the “Employed person with disabilities” option – by four people, and the “Own business” option – by four people only, these responses were not taken into account in the analysis.

There are no statistically significant differences between individual groups in terms of the stress coping styles used by their members. Thus it can be stated that the employment status does not influence the choice of coping styles by war refugees.

The correlation between the stress coping styles used by war refugees and changes in their income was checked using Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient. No link was identified between changes in income and the stress coping styles used.

The Mann-Whitney tests were conducted for independent samples to find out whether the knowledge of a foreign language, except for Russian, caused the respondents to use different stress coping styles. One person did not answer this question, so the respondent was excluded from the calculation. The analysis did not identify any link between the respondents’ knowledge of a foreign language other than Russian and the stress coping styles they adhered to.

Also the Mann-Whitney tests were conducted for independent samples in order to find out whether there was any correlation between the date of the war refugees’ arrival at the current place of residence and their stress coping styles.

Two persons who did not answer this question were excluded from the analysis.

Significant differences were only discovered in one variable – engaging in compensatory (alternative) activities, although the dependence is weak. The intensity of this stress coping style is higher for those who left their previous place of residence in 2022 (Me=18.00, IQR=7.00) than for those who left their previous place of residence in 2023 (Me=16.00, IQR=6.00). This may be due to better adaptation to new conditions by people who have lived in the new place for a longer period of time.

Similarly, there is no correlation between the loss of life or health by a family member due to the war and the stress coping styles used, as proved by the Mann-Whitney tests for independent samples.

The existence of a link between the feeling of loneliness and the stress coping styles used by the respondents was checked using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Table 2 shows that the corresponding correlations are significant.

The identified correlation values make it possible to conclude that only four relationships are statistically significant:

- the feeling of social loneliness against SSZ – the relationship is weak and has a negative trend (the more intense the feeling of social loneliness, the lower the intensity of the task-oriented style) $r=-0.204$, $p<0.001$;
- the feeling of social loneliness against SSU – the relationship is weak and has a negative trend (the more intense the feeling of social loneliness, the lower the intensity of the avoidance-oriented style) $r=-0.125$, $p=0.031$.

Table 2. Relationship between the feeling of loneliness and the stress coping styles

Variable		SSZ	SSE	SSU	ACZ	PKT
The feeling of social loneliness	<i>r</i>	-0,204	-0,014	-0,125	-0,096	-0,111
	<i>p</i>	<0,001	0,816	0,031	0,099	0,055
The feeling of emotional loneliness	<i>r</i>	-0,061	-0,029	0,012	0,014	0,043
	<i>p</i>	0,290	0,621	0,830	0,814	0,458
The feeling of existential loneliness	<i>r</i>	-0,206	-0,010	-0,069	-0,047	-0,065
	<i>p</i>	<0,001	0,869	0,233	0,418	0,263
The feeling of global loneliness	<i>r</i>	-0,175	-0,020	-0,063	-0,044	-0,044
	<i>p</i>	0,002	0,725	0,275	0,445	0,448

- the feeling of existential loneliness against SSZ – the relationship is also weak and has a negative trend (the more intense the feeling of existential loneliness, the lower the intensity of the task-oriented style) $r=-0.206$, $p<0.001$;
- the feeling of global loneliness against SSZ – the relationship is weak and has a negative trend (the more intense the feeling of global loneliness, the lower the intensity of the task-oriented style) $r=-0.175$, $p=0.002$.

The correlations between the remaining pairs of variables are statistically insignificant.

The strongest correlation was found between the feeling of existential loneliness and the task-oriented style ($r=-0.206$, $p<0.001$), while the weakest – between the feeling of social loneliness and the avoidance-oriented style ($r=-0.125$, $p=0.031$).

Thus, the obtained findings that testify to the negative relationship between the feelings of social, existential, and global loneliness and the task-oriented style confirm the conclusions found in literature on psychology that loneliness significantly undermines the ability to set goals and solve urgent tasks, and decreases the feelings of well-being, vitality, and adaptability¹⁰.

Scholars studying the phenomenon of loneliness have found that this feeling reduces people's openness to new experiences, their ability to control their living environment, to set life goals, to successfully solve tasks, to weigh risks, and to take drastic decisions. In addition, loneliness has a negative effect on people's social adaptability, namely, their willingness to change, their readiness to take constructive actions aimed at getting over failure and achieving set goals. Loneliness also affects the choice of the self-control style and the stress coping strategy (planning, modelling, programming, evaluation of results, flexibility, and independence)¹¹.

At the beginning of our study, we made an assumption that the dominant face of loneliness would be the existential face. Therefore, a check was carried out to see whether the rankings of the three aspects of loneliness would change.

For this purpose, a one-way analysis of variance with repeated measurements was carried out, because the distribution of the variable deviated slightly from the norm (skewedness

¹⁰ L. Svendsen, *A philosophy of loneliness*, Reaktion Books, 2017. 240 p.

¹¹ В. Бедан, Індивідуально-типологічні особливості схильності особистості до переживання самотності: дис. ... канд. психол. наук: 09.00.01. Одеса 2018. 319 с.

in the range from -1 to 1), while the sample was large (299 individuals). Since the number of components measuring individual aspects of loneliness was different, the analysis included mean unit values (the minimum value -1 , and the maximum value -4).

The findings of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for repeated measurements are presented in Table 2.

Since the W-test is significant ($p=0.023$), the sphericity of the data cannot possibly be assumed. Therefore, the findings of the F-test were read using the result with the Greenhouse-Geisser correction.

The conducted analysis shows that the difference in the intensity levels of different aspects of loneliness is statistically significant $F(1.951; 581.366)=60.50$; $p<0.001$. In order to see which of the three aspects differ, an ex post facto analysis was performed with the Bonferroni correction for several comparisons. The findings of this analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Findings of the variance analysis for differences in the levels of loneliness aspects

	Mean	Mauchly's W	Significance	F with Greenhouse-Geisser correction	Significance
Social loneliness	2.61	0.98	0.023	60.50	< 0.001
Emotional loneliness	2.48				
Existential loneliness	2.75				

In this approach, loneliness is interpreted as a given of existence, since existential loneliness is associated with the fact that "we come into the world alone and we leave it alone".¹²

In the case of war refugees, this type of loneliness is increased by experiencing the loss of their usual way of life, their home, their social circle, and their need to integrate into a new social community.

The next step was to test the hypothesis that war refugees are characterized by different stress coping styles. The findings of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for repeated measurements are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Multilevel comparisons of loneliness aspects

		Difference in means	Standard deviation	Significance
Social loneliness	Emotional loneliness	0.136	0.025	<0.001
Social loneliness	Existential loneliness	-0.142	0.024	<0.001
Emotional loneliness	Existential loneliness	-0.278	0.027	<0.001

Statistically significant results are highlighted in bold.

¹² В. Кізіма, Організація дослідження соціально-психологічних способів опанування самотності жителями мегаполіса. Актуальні проблеми психології: зб. наук. Праць Інституту психології імені Г. С. Костюка НАПН України. 2015. Т. 42, № 1. С. 148–154.

The intensity level of existential loneliness ($M=2.75$; $SD=0.54$) is significantly higher than that of social loneliness ($M=2.61$; $SD=0.45$) and emotional loneliness ($M=2.48$; $SD=0.53$) – in both cases $p < 0.001$. The intensity level of emotional loneliness ($M=2.48$; $SD=0.53$) is significantly lower than that of social loneliness ($M=2.61$; $SD=0.45$).

The above data prove the hypothesis about the dominant face of loneliness being the existential face. The study has shown that the intensity level of emotional loneliness is the lowest.

The obtained findings regarding the existential face of loneliness can be considered in the context of existential psychology, whose supporters believe that the basis of the individual existence of any person is internal isolation. If the person does not receive any satisfactory response to their emotions and experiences from the outside world, they withdraw and sink into loneliness.

Since the W criterion is not significant ($p=0.069$), the assumption of data sphericity is fulfilled. The analysis shows that the variance of the presented coping styles is statistically significant $F(2.596)=91.94$; $p < 0.001$. An ex post facto analysis with the Bonferroni correction was performed for multiple comparisons to examine the internal links between individual styles. The findings of this analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Findings of the stress coping style variance analysis

	Mean	Mauchly's W	Significance	F	Significance
SSZ	51.84	0.98	0.069	91.94	<0.001
SSE	47.29				
SSU	43.32				

Table 6. Multiple comparisons of the stress coping styles

		Difference in means	Standard deviation	Significance
SSZ	SSE	4.548	0.666	<0.001
SSZ	SSU	8.522	0.625	<0.001
SSE	SSU	3.973	0.594	<0.001

The intensity of the task-oriented style ($M=51.84$, $SD=10.06$) differed significantly from that of the emotion-focused style ($M=47.29$, $SD=8.64$) and the avoidance-oriented style ($M=43.32$; $SD=8.05$). It can be seen that war refugees predominantly adhere to the task-oriented coping style, and use the avoidance-oriented style least often.

The findings of the analysis show that the task-oriented coping style predominates among the surveyed war refugees. This result may indirectly indicate the generally successful adaptation of refugees to a new social environment and their ability to cope with the feeling of loneliness.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the theoretical analysis of the problem of loneliness and its connection with the generally adopted stress coping styles, as well as taking into account the results of the conducted empirical research, it can be stated that war refugees are faced with many psychological problems. These include the pain of losing their homes; the feeling of not belonging in a community, of being a stranger, of having no homeland; the loss of symbolic things and places that evoke happy memories, where they have spent their “whole life”; fear for the well-being of themselves and their loved ones who have not come along but stayed behind in their home town or village; the lack of prospects, uncertainty about the future; the feeling of their uselessness and abandonment (which is especially true about the elderly); the feelings of loneliness and guilt.

The analysis of the correlations between socio-demographic and socio-economic variables and the feeling of loneliness, conducted by the research team, has shown that neither gender, age, education, the knowledge of a foreign language, marital status, employment status, or place of residence determines the intensity level of loneliness.

Only one correlation has been found to be statistically significant – the link between changes in income and the feeling of social loneliness. This correlation is positive: the feeling of existential loneliness grows as income increases.

The study has shown that the above variables do not determine the choice of the stress coping styles either.

It has been found that the intensity of the emotion-focused style is higher in people living in rented apartments or staying with family or friends compared to those living in collective housing facilities.

The correlation analysis has revealed a link between the feeling of loneliness and the stress coping styles used. The research has shown an inverse relationship between the feelings of social, existential, and global loneliness, and the task-oriented style.

The study has confirmed the hypothesis that the existential face is the dominant face of loneliness, while the level of emotional loneliness has been found to be the lowest.

The analysis findings show that the task-oriented coping style predominates among the surveyed war refugees.

It should be noted, however, that the obtained data must be interpreted taking into account the fact that the war refugees would not open up and were not completely sincere during the survey, which was due to the challenging conditions in which they had found themselves and the psychological problems that inevitably accompany the loss of one's home, established rhythm and way of life, the fear experienced in the recent past, as well as uncertainty and fear about the future.

The numerous psychological anchors and defence mechanisms, which the respondents had undoubtedly developed in the circumstances they found themselves in, may have prevented them from being more open when filling in the questionnaire. It can be assumed that the survey itself was quite stressful for the respondents, as it evoked traumatic memories and exacerbated their stressful emotional reactions. For this reason, it seems expedient to provide safe conditions and psychological support to respondents during this kind of surveys. The research team believes that the findings of the study are of considerable value and should be used in practice when providing psychological help to war refugees.

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Natalia Podoliak, Valentyna Stets

Проблема самотності та стилів переживання стресу серед біженців війни в контексті пережитого досвіду на прикладі дослідження в Дрогобичі

У статті подано результати емпіричного дослідження відчуття самотності та стилів подолання стресу в біженців війни, що проживають у місті Дрогобичі.

Здійснено теоретичний аналіз проблеми самотності та стилів подолання стресу. У результаті аналізу виявлено, що проблема самотності широко представлена у психологічній літературі, є складною, трактується з дуже різних аспектів і не має однозначного вирішення. Цей феномен вивчається з позиції великої кількості концептуальних підходів. У контексті переживання самотності та її зв'язку зі стилями подолання стресу біженцями війни в Україні є досить невеликий обсяг досліджень.

Метою дослідження було виявлення специфіки проявів самотності, зокрема трьох її аспектів: соціальної, емоційної та екзистенційної самотності, та її зв'язок зі стилями подолання стресу у вимушених переселенців, що проживають на території Дрогобицької громади.

Для вивчення означених явищ було використано такий психодіагностичний інструментарій: скорочена шкала самотності (SBS-AD) – автор Z. Dołęga; анкета подолання стресових ситуацій (CISS, розроблена психологами N.S. Endler та J.D.A. Parker) у польській адаптації П. Щепаніка, Я. Стреляу, К. Вжешневського (P. Szczepanik, J. Strelau, K. Wrześniewski); оригінальна анкета, що була спеціально розроблена для потреб даного дослідження.

У результаті вивчення теоретико-методологічних аспектів проблеми та здійсненого емпіричного дослідження було підтверджено гіпотезу про те, що самотність біженців війни має екзистенційне обличчя та пов'язана зі стилями подолання стресу. Було виявлено, що серед біженців війни домінує стиль, що орієнтований на завдання. Загалом, проблема самотності та стилів подолання стресу потребує подальшого вивчення та використання результатів досліджень у практиці психологічної допомоги біженцям війни.

Ключові слова: вимушена міграція, самотність, стрес, біженці війни, внутрішньо переміщені особи.

STRESZCZENIE

Natalia Podolak, Valentyna Stets

Problem samotności i stylów przeżywania stresu wśród uchodźców wojennych w kontekście doświadczeń życiowych (na przykładzie badań w Drohobyczu)

W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań empirycznych dotyczących poczucia samotności i stylów radzenia sobie ze stresem wśród uchodźców wojennych mieszkających w mieście Drohobycz.

Dokonano analizy teoretycznej problemu samotności i stylów radzenia sobie ze stresem. W wyniku analizy stwierdzono, że problem samotności jest szeroko prezentowany w literaturze psychologicznej, jest złożony, interpretowany w bardzo różnych aspektach i nie ma jednoznacznego rozwiązania. Zjawisko to jest badane z punktu widzenia dużej liczby podejść konceptualnych. W kontekście doświadczenia samotności i jej związku ze stylami radzenia sobie ze stresem uchodźców wojennych w Ukrainie istnieje stosunkowo niewiele badań.

Celem badania było poznanie specyfiki przejawów samotności, w szczególności jej trzech aspektów: samotności społecznej, emocjonalnej i egzystencjalnej oraz jej powiązania ze stylami radzenia sobie ze stresem u migrantów przymusowych zamieszkujących terytorium drohobyckiej społeczności.

Do badania tych zjawisk wykorzystano następujący zestaw narzędzi psychodiagnostycznych: skróconą skalę samotności (SBS-AD) – autor Z. Dołęga; kwestionariusz radzenia sobie w sytuacjach stresowych (CISS N. S. Endlera, J. D. A. Parkera) w polskiej adaptacji P. Szczepanika, J. Strelaua, K. Wrześniewskiego; autorską ankietę, opracowaną specjalnie na potrzeby niniejszego badania.

W wyniku przestudiowania teoretycznych i metodologicznych aspektów problemu oraz przeprowadzonych badań empirycznych potwierdzono hipotezę, że samotność uchodźców wojennych ma oblicze egzystencjalne i jest powiązana ze stylami radzenia sobie ze stresem. Stwierdzono, że wśród uchodźców wojennych dominuje styl zorientowany na zadanie. Generalnie problematyka samotności i stylów radzenia sobie ze stresem wymaga dalszych badań i wykorzystania wyników badań w praktyce, udzielania pomocy psychologicznej uchodźcom wojennym.

Słowa kluczowe: migracja przymusowa, samotność, stres, uchodźcy wojenni, osób wewnątrznie przesiedlonych.

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