

# Preventing Stress and Anxiety in Children and Adults during Martial Law: Prospects for Ukraine and Worldwide

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**Abstract:** *The article examines the psychological impact of war on emotional well-being. It focuses on rehabilitation methods for children and adults who have experienced psychological trauma during wartime. Given Russia's war against Ukraine, addressing stress and anxiety management has become a critical concern for Ukrainians. This article aims to accomplish four main objectives. First, it defines key psychological constructs (stress, fear, and anxiety) in the context of war and displacement. Second, it analyzes existing literature on the psychological impact of war on children and adults. Third, it identifies primary factors contributing to stress resilience as a foundation for mental health. Finally, it proposes rehabilitation methods to mitigate the psychological effects of war. The research is grounded in a comprehensive analysis of scientific literature and a systematic methodological approach. The findings emphasize that psychological resilience is fundamental to maintaining mental well-being. In particular, children affected by psychological trauma require timely diagnosis and professional psychological support to reduce the long-term consequences of distress. The article examines various therapeutic interventions, including music therapy, art therapy, martial arts, and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, as potential methods for psychological rehabilitation. The results confirm the profound negative impact of war on emotional health. Children, in particular, are often affected, frequently experiencing heightened fear, anxiety, depression, and difficulty concentrating on their studies. A key contribution of this article is the identification of distance learning as an additional factor exacerbating anxiety levels in children. This finding underscores the urgent need for comprehensive psychological support. It also highlights the importance of tailored educational strategies to address the emotional challenges faced by learners in conflict-affected regions.*

**Keywords:** *stress, fear, anxiety, war, mental health, resilience, cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR).*

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## Introduction

A full-scale war continues in Ukraine, leading to significant human losses, widespread destruction, and severe economic damage. It has also created serious challenges for students, parents, and teachers. The war has forced people to live under constant tension and fear, as it is impossible to predict when and where an attack might occur. As a result, addressing stress and anxiety among both adults and children has become critically important – not only for Ukrainians but also for the entire world.

Children who have survived war may appear physically well, especially if they receive timely medical care and proper nutrition. However, their psychological well-being often presents a more complex reality. Exposure to armed conflict can lead to severe emotional distress, with psychological trauma that may persist for decades. This trauma can have lasting effects not only on individuals but also on society as a whole. International organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) and the Red Cross, recognize the long-term impact of war-related trauma. They provide both psychological support and medical assistance to address these enduring effects.

Previous and ongoing research underscores the long-term consequences of early-life exposure to war. Studies on Holocaust survivors reveal lasting psychological distress (Barel et al., 2010). Research in Finland shows that childhood trauma continues to affect mental health decades later (Lahti et al., 2023). Boothby et al. (2006) emphasize the importance of rehabilitation for former child soldiers in Mozambique. They focus on psychological and community support to foster coping skills and social responsibility. Thus, these findings highlight the need for psychological rehabilitation in post-conflict recovery.

Accordingly, this article aims to achieve four key objectives. First, it seeks to define key psychological constructs such as stress, fear, and anxiety within the context of war and displacement. Second, it analyzes existing literature on the psychological impact of war on both children and adults. Third, the article identifies primary factors that contribute to stress resilience, which forms a foundation for mental health. Finally, it proposes rehabilitation methods designed to mitigate the psychological effects of war.

## Conceptualizing stress, fear and anxiety in the context of war

The concept of stress has been widely explored in psychological and physiological research. Hans Selye (1956), a Canadian physiologist of Hungarian descent, was one of the pioneering scholars in studying stress

responses. He noted that various illnesses often begin with similar symptoms, such as fatigue, fever, appetite loss, and headaches. Initially, Selye (2013) described this response as the general adaptation syndrome. Later, he coined the term “stress” to define the body’s nonspecific reaction to any external demand. He emphasized its universal impact on the body’s ability to adapt.

Even in non-conflict settings, individuals regularly deal with stress due to everyday challenges such as time constraints, unforeseen disruptions, and unmet obligations. These stressors, even though seemingly minor, can gradually weaken mental and physical resilience. According to Zhihaylo et al. (2022), stress is “a very unfavourable influence that negatively affects the body” (p. 52). It elicits strong physiological and psychological reactions to unfavourable stimuli. Similarly, Shapar (2004) defines stress as protective physiological responses. They occur in animals and humans in reaction to various adverse factors. These factors include extreme environmental conditions, starvation, psychological and physical trauma, radiation exposure, blood loss, and infections.

Fear and anxiety, being closely related, differ in their psychological mechanisms and manifestations. Fear is typically triggered by an immediate, identifiable threat, while anxiety is a more diffuse and anticipatory emotional state. As noted by Ren & Tao (2020), fear arises in situations of actual or perceived threats to one’s biological or social existence, directed toward an external source of danger.

Anxiety, on the other hand, is characterized by persistent apprehension about potential negative outcomes. Nauholnyk (2015) defines anxiety as a personality trait characterized by a tendency toward excessive worry and heightened emotional distress. This occurs particularly in situations perceived as threatening or potentially leading to failure. Abend (2023) further describes anxiety as a state of heightened sensory vigilance and motor tension in response to a perceived threat. This state prepares an individual for potential danger. In conflict settings, prolonged exposure to war-related stressors can lead to chronic anxiety. This, in turn, significantly impairs cognitive and emotional functioning, especially in children and adolescents.

In the early 1960s, Beck (2020) developed a new direction in psychotherapy, initially calling it cognitive therapy. Today, this approach is generally known as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), a term used in her book.

Beck (2020) introduced a clear, structured, short-term form of therapy aimed at treating depression by addressing current problems and

changing unproductive thought patterns and behaviours. Over time, Beck (2020) and other specialists successfully adapted this method to treat various psychological disorders and life challenges. Even though the techniques, therapy focuses, and treatment durations have evolved, the core theoretical principles of the approach have remained consistent.

In all versions of CBT developed from Beck's model (2020), treatment is based on cognitive schemas, beliefs, and behavioural strategies specific to each disorder. The central element of therapy is conceptualization, which involves a deep understanding of the patient's unique beliefs and behaviour patterns. The therapist's task is to find effective ways to change the patient's thinking and behaviour, promoting long-term positive changes in their emotional state and overall behaviour.

Thus, CBT is one of the most widely used forms of psychotherapy for people with various mental disorders. It is also one of the most scientifically researched methods, with a large evidence base supporting its effectiveness.

According to Ordatii et al. (2024), eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy is a specialized trauma therapy. It is a comprehensive method that combines therapeutic approaches with desensitization and reprocessing. This process involves processing traumatic experiences through eye movement.

Thus, the impact of stress, fear, and anxiety highlights the urgent need for psychological support and rehabilitation efforts in conflict-affected populations, especially among children and adolescents. Prolonged exposure to traumatic events, such as war, can lead to chronic psychological issues that significantly affect cognitive and emotional functioning. Understanding these psychological notions and their manifestations is crucial for developing effective rehabilitation strategies. Such strategies can help mitigate the long-term mental health challenges faced by those in conflict-affected regions. This underscores the importance of early psychological intervention and ongoing support.

### **The psychological impact of war: a review of studies on trauma and mental health**

A thorough review of relevant literature reveals that Ukrainian and international scholars have explored the psychological impact of war on individuals of all ages. These studies highlight the profound effects on mental health and well-being. Notable works include those by Dichek & Kravchenko (2024), Matlasevych & Mykolaychuk (2023), Meshko et al.

(2023), Oksiutovych & Sabadukha (2023), Podzhynska & Maksymenko (2024), among others.

Matlasevych & Mykolaychuk (2023) investigate the stressors brought on by war. These include participation in combat, loss of loved ones, threats of violence, forced relocation, and a decline in quality of life. Such circumstances lead to significant moral strain, as individuals struggle with negative emotions and the need to adapt. Young couples, in particular, face not only personal psychological and physical challenges but also complex decisions about relationships and family life. During times of danger, heightened anxiety about partners increases the importance of family social support. Anxiety, in turn, raises expectations for a partner's behaviour in stressful situations, which can either alleviate or heighten feelings of security and life satisfaction. The researchers also discuss the activation of attachment mechanisms in response to major life changes, such as war, illness, separation, or relocation. These mechanisms aim to reduce stress by seeking support and reevaluating relationships with loved ones.

Neria et al. (2010) explore the mental health consequences of the 2008-2009 Israel-Gaza war on young Israeli civilians. Their findings reveal a significant decrease in symptoms of PTSD, major depressive disorder (MDD), and generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) over time. The study highlights the crucial role of perceived social support in moderating emotional responses and predicting long-term mental health outcomes. These results emphasize the importance of social support and early emotional responses in trauma recovery. They underscore the need for prompt care for those showing severe emotional reactions.

Oksiutovych & Sabadukha (2023) examine the psychological impact of trauma on children. They focus on how such experiences affect socialization and psychological well-being. In the context of ongoing war and the resulting stressors, scholars argue that it is vital to understand how traumatic events influence children's mental health and their ability to adapt socially. They stress the importance of early diagnosis and psychological support for children who have experienced trauma. Indeed, these experiences can have long-lasting effects on both physical and mental development. The study also underscores the role of timely intervention in developing effective psychotherapy and rehabilitation strategies for affected children. During wartime, children lose not only loved ones and possessions but also the sense of comfort that typically defines peaceful times. Family traditions are disrupted, and children grow up in environments marked by monotony and constant anxiety. Parents also face the challenge of ensuring the safety of their children. This often involves relocating to different cities

or countries, which contributes to heightened fear and anxiety for both parents and children.

Meshko et al. (2023) examine the emotional impact of war on students, particularly during the learning process. Researchers emphasize that war significantly impacts student's emotional state. The main manifestations include fear, anxiety, depression, and difficulties with concentration during learning.

Students openly share their experiences. Some admit feeling scared due to the involvement of their loved ones in combat. They also express anxiety about Ukraine's future, which leads to a loss of motivation and a sense of depression. Others mention that after watching the news during breaks, they lose motivation to study and feel drained. Some students complain about sleep difficulties, constant anxiety, loneliness, and depression. A few students talk about a depressive mood, worsened health, and even aggressive emotions in response to their traumatic experiences in cities such as Irpin and Bucha. Many children note that they cannot focus on their studies because of constant thoughts about danger, news of explosions, and concerns for their loved ones at the front. Some students express faith in the protection provided by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. They acknowledge that the flow of negative news, however, seriously affects their emotional state and ability to concentrate (Meshko et al., 2023).

Joseph et al. (1997) provide a broader perspective on the psychological impact of negative life events. They summarize how stress and anxiety affect individuals. They also point out that the intensity of an event plays a significant role in determining the severity of psychological disorders. Poor living conditions can exacerbate stress, as seen in the long-lasting psychological effects of natural disasters, which can persist for 3 to 5 years. In contrast, the effects of technological accidents (such as those occurring within 30 miles of the disaster site) tend to be less severe. Importantly, the experience of trauma is influenced by individual perception. Some people may internalize events, leading to intense emotions such as anger and frustration, while others may cope more easily.

Thus, the reviewed studies demonstrate that the psychological impact of war is profound, affecting individuals of all ages. The trauma caused by such events can lead to long-term mental health challenges. The severity of these challenges is influenced by factors such as the intensity of the event, the availability of social support, and individual perceptions of the experience. Timely intervention, including psychological support and early care, plays a crucial role in mitigating these effects and supporting recovery. As the research highlights, addressing the mental health needs of both adults

and children during times of war is critical for fostering resilience and promoting psychological well-being in the aftermath of trauma.

### **Stress resilience as a foundation for mental health**

To begin with, personal stressors, such as uncomfortable living or working conditions, can significantly contribute to emotional distress. Other factors include lack of sleep, academic pressures from parents, poor time management, family conflicts, and unstable self-esteem. These often lead to rapid fatigue, persistent fear, sudden anxiety, and irritability. Additionally, stressors can involve fear during moments of danger or while seeking shelter, as well as concerns about personal safety and the safety of loved ones. Memory issues and difficulties in concentrating are also common contributors to emotional distress (Zhihaylo et al., 2022).

Psychological resilience is a critical factor, encompassing the ability to assess stressful situations, regulate behaviour during stress, and manage the effects of traumatic events on the individual. University life, in particular, is filled with intense pressures and stressors that can adversely affect one's well-being.

In today's Ukraine, building stress resilience is more crucial than ever as individuals and communities navigate the ongoing challenges of war, political instability, and economic uncertainty. These stressors, combined with the emotional and psychological toll of the war and its aftermath, necessitate a focused approach to mental health. Stress resilience refers to the ability to withstand and recover from adversity. It also serves as a key foundation for maintaining psychological well-being during difficult times. Several primary factors contribute to stress resilience. All of them are particularly important in the context of Ukraine's current situation (Zhihaylo et al., 2022).

Halchenko et al. (2024) examine resilience among participants in the educational process amid traumatic stressors. The researchers stress the importance of developing stress resilience in both teachers and parents, as they are key sources of support for students and children. Providing meaningful and effective support through short-term psychoeducational interventions is crucial in these contexts.

Raundalen & Dyregrov (1991) studied the psychological impact of war on children, focusing on their experiences during war. As a result of the war, 62% of children were forced to leave their homes. However, only 39% of them changed their educational institutions. Approximately one-third of the children experienced separation from one of their parents for more than three months. Half of the caregivers confirmed that they did not live with

relatives or friends in their hometowns either. Many children became orphans after losing their parents and had to relocate.

The displacement of children became a major source of stress. Over 56% of children suffered physical injuries or lost their homes due to the destruction of buildings during the conflict. Additionally, violent actions by armed groups, known as “bandits,” who fought against the government, further intensified the children’s suffering. These groups destroyed villages, schools, and medical facilities, forcing children to experience the horrors of war (Raundalen & Dyregrov, 1991).

Around 35% of children confirmed that their schools were destroyed. Even those who continued their education lived in constant fear because of the nearby combat operations. All educational institutions were at risk of attack, which added to the stress. The brutal treatment of children, including physical violence and forced involvement in military activities, left deep psychological scars. This violence significantly impacted the children’s ability to trust adults and adapt to a peaceful life (Raundalen & Dyregrov, 1991).

In conclusion, personal stressors, along with the challenges of living through war and political instability, have a profound impact on emotional and psychological well-being, particularly in Ukraine. Building stress resilience is essential for navigating these difficult times and maintaining mental health. Resilience, the ability to cope with adversity and recover from it, is key to facing the ongoing hardships caused by conflict. The war has severely affected children and families, making it crucial to implement strategies that support resilience, particularly within educational settings. Providing meaningful support for teachers, parents, and children through focused interventions is vital to help them cope with these stressors. Addressing the psychological effects of the war and fostering resilience will be a critical step toward healing and ensuring long-term mental well-being.

### **Rehabilitation methods for children and adults affected by psychological trauma during war**

The psychological impact of war, particularly in the context of Ukraine, has become a critical concern. Various therapeutic methods have emerged to address the emotional and mental health needs of children and adults affected by war.

Dichek & Kravchenko (2024) examine social-psychological support for children in wartime conditions. They highlight the challenges faced by Ukrainian schoolchildren. Their physical and emotional well-being is compromised by sleep disturbances, anxiety, fear, mood swings, fatigue,



sadness, frustration, anger, irritability, and increased conflict, particularly with parents. The transition to distance learning disrupts daily routines and exacerbates stress. Concerns about family, friends, and other distractions hinder concentration, contributing to heightened anxiety during the war.

The researchers propose key strategies for psycho-correctional work and emphasize the use of psychosocial support technologies. These approaches aim to help children assess their life situation, identify personal strengths, and promote self-restoration and resilience. However, the psychological toll of war on adults, particularly parents and caregivers, is equally critical. Adults, especially those who are displaced or who have witnessed or experienced trauma, may experience depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These conditions can affect their ability to provide stable environments for their children and manage their psychological well-being (Dichek & Kravchenko, 2024).

Podzhynska & Maksymenko (2024) stress the importance of ensuring the mental health of displaced children and their caregivers for Ukraine's future. Today's children face a range of complex psychological challenges. One important task for adults is to create an environment where children feel that their happy childhood is genuinely valued by the older generation. Considering the nature of children's perceptions, it is important to remember that they often tend to blame themselves for the events happening around them. Their behaviour is largely influenced by their natural egocentrism. Children also seek to be part of collective efforts and sincerely wish for the war to end as soon as possible.

A key aspect of distance learning is the effect of co-presence. This refers to the simultaneous presence of students and teachers in a shared space, even if it is virtual. Reducing physical distance between participants helps children maintain a sense of reality during lessons. Since the pandemic began, international psychologists have actively studied this effect. After all, it plays an important role in productivity for remote work and learning.

However, asynchronous formats, such as learning platforms, cannot provide co-presence effectively. These formats lack real-time interaction and only transmit information. This creates additional challenges for research on the impact of such formats on children's development during distance learning. Without direct interaction with teachers and peers, psychological difficulties may arise.

Music therapy is an effective method for helping children who have experienced psychological trauma during the war. One of the most recognized techniques was proposed by Bensimon (2020). This method focuses on restoring children's psychological balance through musical

elements. The therapy process relies on several key aspects. They help children overcome traumatic experiences, as well as foster their psychological resilience.

1. *Creating a play environment.* The first principle of therapy is to create a space where the child feels safe and free from stress. There should be no pressure or coercion. The play element is crucial, as children subconsciously associate play with joy and carefree moments. Music therapy involves using various instruments, songs, and melodies to trigger positive emotions and reduce tension. For example, children can use percussion instruments to express their feelings through rhythm. This allows them to transform fear into play, making it less threatening.

2. *Repeating structured song elements.* Another important aspect is the use of repeated, structured elements in songs. Elements such as melody, rhyme, rhythm, and fixed meter help children develop a sense of stability and control. This is particularly useful for children who have experienced stress and have trouble with emotional regulation. Repeating musical fragments allows children to feel predictability and safety. For instance, a song where each verse or chorus is repeated can create a sense of regularity, positively affecting the child's emotional state.

3. *The role of singing in building psychological resilience.* Singing is essential in developing a child's psychological resilience. It serves as both an emotional outlet and a tool for reducing stress and anxiety. While singing, children can release emotions that are hard to express with words. In turn, this helps them process trauma with less emotional tension. Singing also encourages social interaction, as children often sing in groups, helping them build connections with others.

During therapeutic sessions, the music therapist may use various exercises, such as individual playing or collective singing. Children might play instruments to the melody of a calming song, and then sing the song together. The song should be simple to remember, with a clear rhythm and melody. This should allow children to immerse themselves in the music and temporarily forget about their stressful situations.

Consequently, Bensimon's (2020) therapy method provides a safe environment where children can release emotions, overcome fear, and restore psychological balance. The use of musical elements, such as rhythm, melody, and singing, helps children feel more confident and strengthens their emotional resilience. This approach is a vital tool in restoring the mental health of children who have experienced trauma and helps them find harmony through music.

Art therapy is one of the most effective methods for helping children who have experienced traumatic events. Ugurlu et al. (2016) support this approach. They analyze how art therapy reduces symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety in children. They believe art therapy to be a crucial tool for rehabilitating children's mental health. This is because it allows children to express feelings and experiences difficult to put into words, working directly with their emotional state through creative processes.

1. *Art therapy as a treatment for PTSD.* PTSD is one of the most challenging psychological traumas children may face after such events as war, violence, or other catastrophes. Symptoms of PTSD in children can include nightmares, recurring memories of the trauma, fears, insomnia, isolation, and emotional detachment. Art therapy provides a safe and constructive way for children to express their experiences. It is a key tool for reducing the anxiety and fear common in PTSD. Through drawing, sculpting, role-playing, and other creative methods, children can express their emotions and regain control over them. By creating images related to traumatic events, children can reduce internal tension and begin to cope with their emotions. For example, a child might draw images of fear or aggression. This helps the therapist identify emotional blocks and assist the child in processing these emotions in a safe environment.

2. *Art therapy in treating depression.* Depression in children can manifest as prolonged sadness, loss of interest in activities, feelings of helplessness, and low self-esteem. Art therapy is effective in treating depression because it promotes emotional release and helps children reconnect with themselves and their feelings. Children with depression may find it difficult to express their emotions verbally. Art therapy offers an alternative by allowing them to communicate their inner experiences through art. For example, using dark colours or depicting symbolic figures can indicate a depressive state, enabling the therapist to understand which emotional areas need support. Creating positive images, such as drawings or clay sculptures, can foster a sense of hope and improve the child's view of themselves and the world. Additionally, art therapy helps children develop emotional regulation skills, which are essential in treating depression.

3. *Art therapy for anxiety disorders.* Anxiety in children often appears as constant worry, fear of the future, fear of social interactions, or specific situations. These symptoms can arise from trauma, or the uncertainty associated with war, violence, or other stressful events. Art therapy helps reduce anxiety by providing a space for self-expression, where children can explore their anxious thoughts and feelings. For instance, drawing calming,

harmonious images or using techniques such as sculpting or creating collages can help children manage anxiety and learn self-regulation. Additionally, art therapists may use meditation or relaxation techniques alongside creative exercises. This helps children restore inner peace and regain control over their emotions.

During an art therapy session focused on overcoming anxiety, depression, and PTSD, the therapist might ask the child to create a drawing or composition that reflects their inner state. Later, the therapist can discuss these images, helping the child understand and express their feelings. This process is vital in healing, as working with creativity enables children to feel supported and gain control over their emotions.

Thus, art therapy is an extremely effective method for treating children who have experienced trauma, depression, and anxiety. It allows children to express their feelings in a safe and accessible way, helping them process traumatic experiences. According to Ugurlu et al. (2016), art therapy reduces symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety. It also fosters emotional development, enhancing the child's ability to self-regulate and improving their overall quality of life.

As noted by Akthar & Lovell (2018), art therapy provides refugee children with a safe space for psychological healing. It helps them discover new aspects of themselves, rebuild trust, share personal stories, and understand each other.

The methods of art therapy rely on art, which is effective for many reasons. For children, art therapy is engaging, educational, and beneficial. It helps them develop new skills, gain knowledge, strengthen their emotional state, improve self-awareness, and boost self-esteem. Coholic (2010) suggests activities such as games, physical exercises, meditation, and guided imagery for group and individual sessions with children.

The new millennium has brought global challenges to people's health and well-being. Fuller & Lloyd (2020) claim that physical exercises, particularly martial arts, might improve physical and psychological-emotional health. Their observations indicate that in high-income countries, deaths from cardiovascular diseases are increasing. This rise is often attributed to a sedentary lifestyle, poor nutrition, uncontrolled weight, and dependence on nicotine and alcohol. Additionally, conditions such as diabetes contribute to heart attacks, kidney failure, vision problems, and, in some cases, blindness, nervous disorders, amputations, and even death. Obesity is also seen as a factor in these negative outcomes. Furthermore, diabetes can lead to issues such as low self-esteem and lack of confidence.

To support mental health and manage stress, the authors of this article recommend various methods. These include using fish oil as a supplement to the main diet, practising meditation, undergoing manual therapy, engaging in the arts, and exploring Chinese medicine. However, regular martial arts practice appears to be the most important method. Martial arts are accessible to people of all ages and help maintain physical health. They also improve well-being and boost self-esteem. Additionally, martial arts serve as an educational tool, teaching discipline, and developing memory, imagination, attention, and thinking. They also adopt a pragmatic approach. However, the greatest challenge to healthy eating in today's world, where information technology dominates, is that young people view the process as time-consuming.

Pujari (2023) argues that martial arts promote movement, mindfulness, and discipline, all of which help improve self-esteem, emotional regulation, and overall well-being. Combining martial arts with cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) proves especially effective for individuals with PTSD, depression, anxiety, and anger issues. While martial arts emphasize mindfulness and the mind-body connection, CBT focuses on helping individuals identify and challenge negative thought patterns. Together, these approaches foster emotional resilience and significantly improve mental health outcomes. Moreover, martial arts provide a form of physical expression that enables individuals to release emotional tension and better manage stress.

Research suggests that CBT and martial arts can work synergistically to reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Physical activity in martial arts promotes the release of endorphins, which lower stress hormones and enhance mood. The discipline and mindfulness inherent in martial arts help individuals build stronger coping mechanisms, while CBT equips them with strategies to address cognitive distortions. As a result, this combination can improve cognitive functions, including memory, attention, and emotional regulation.

Serputko et al. (2022) describe aikido therapy as an innovative method for physiological and psycho-emotional rehabilitation among children and adolescents. It is especially useful for recovery after psychological trauma, and stress, and for improving overall physical health. This method combines physical activity with a spiritual component. Such a combination makes it impactful for a child's development from a physiological and psychological perspective.

1. *Basics of aikido as a therapeutic method.* Aikido is a Japanese martial art that requires participants to develop physical skills. It also demands a deep

understanding of inner harmony, self-control, calmness, and concentration. Unlike other martial arts, aikido focuses on minimizing force and preserving energy. It aims to restore inner balance and promote physical and psychological health. Aikido therapy emphasizes movements that require balance, softness, precision, and focus. This approach helps children and adolescents restore their physical fitness while also focusing on their emotional state, well-being, and body control.

2. *Impact on the child's physiological state.* From a physiological perspective, aikido therapy helps restore the body's vital functions that may have been disrupted by stress or trauma. The movements in aikido activate muscles, improve blood circulation, strengthen the cardiovascular system, and enhance flexibility. The physiological benefits include a) *improved coordination and balance* (aikido techniques require children to maintain constant control over their bodies; this strengthens the vestibular system and aids in balance development); b) *reduced physical tension* (the special movement style in aikido helps release muscle tension that builds up due to stress or anxiety); and c) *improved physical fitness* (aikido exercises focus on strengthening muscles, enhancing flexibility, and building endurance, which is crucial for a child's overall development).

3. *Psycho-emotional effects of aikido therapy.* In addition to the physiological benefits, aikido has a significant impact on the psycho-emotional state of children. Aikido helps develop self-control, focus, and calmness. They are especially important for children who have experienced trauma or are under stress. The psycho-emotional benefits are as follows:

- *Development of self-control:* Aikido teaches children to control not only their physical movements but also their emotions. Techniques requiring precision and attentiveness help children focus on the present moment and learn to manage their emotions. This is particularly important for children suffering from anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

- *Reduction of stress and tension:* Aikido promotes deep relaxation, reducing both physical and psychological tension. Slow, controlled movements help children release stress and find inner calm. Breathing techniques in aikido also lower anxiety and nervous tension.

- *Improvement in concentration and attention:* Aikido encourages children to focus on their movements, techniques, and rhythm. This develops their ability to concentrate, which is beneficial not only in aikido but also in other areas, such as academics and social interactions.

4. *Rehabilitation effect on moral exhaustion.* Children who have experienced traumatic events often suffer from moral exhaustion. This may manifest as apathy, feelings of hopelessness, or a loss of interest in activities. Aikido therapy helps reduce these symptoms with its physical and psycho-emotional benefits. Children begin to feel more physically active and emotionally stable, contributing to a restoration of energy and an improvement in their psycho-emotional state.

During an art therapy session designed to help children recover from trauma, the instructor may incorporate exercises that focus on balance, concentration, and calmness. Children may practice aikido techniques that require precision and concentration. For example, exercises that transition from tension to relaxation can help relieve stress and enhance emotional well-being. After each technique, a brief reflection allows children to share their feelings and experiences.

Aikido therapy proves to be a promising approach for physiological and psycho-emotional rehabilitation among children and adolescents. By combining physical activity with the development of inner harmony and self-control, aikido helps restore the body, reducing stress, improving emotional states, and fostering the growth of essential life skills. Given its numerous benefits, aikido can be an effective tool in rehabilitating children who have experienced trauma, stress, or moral exhaustion.

Shapiro & Forrest (2016) explore eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy as a method for addressing anxiety, stress, and trauma. Based on the adaptive information processing model, EMDR helps individuals process traumatic memories and break the cycle of emotional and physical distress. This therapy is particularly useful for war veterans, survivors of terrorist attacks, and individuals who have experienced significant losses. While cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) focuses on behaviours and cognitive functions, EMDR integrates techniques from psychodynamic therapy, cognitive therapy, and family therapy. It addresses the whole person, emotions, thoughts, physical sensations, and behaviours, helping individuals experience joy, love, and connection while promoting overall psychological well-being.

Consequently, the psychological impact of war on children and adults requires a multifaceted approach to therapy. While traditional methods such as CBT and EMDR offer valuable support, complementary therapies such as art, music, and martial arts are crucial in promoting resilience, self-esteem, and emotional regulation. These therapies provide a holistic approach that addresses the complex psychological needs of both children and adults, helping them heal and recover from the trauma of war.

By integrating various therapeutic methods, individuals can rebuild their psychological well-being, fostering recovery and long-term resilience in the face of war.

## Conclusion

This article emphasizes the critical importance of addressing the psychological impact of war on children and adults, particularly in Ukraine. The ongoing war has significantly disrupted daily life and well-being. The findings highlight the urgent need for effective therapeutic interventions to help individuals cope with the psychological toll of the war, especially concerning stress, anxiety, and trauma.

The article offers valuable insights into various rehabilitation methodologies for trauma survivors. It highlights therapies such as music therapy, art therapy, martial arts, and EMDR therapy. These approaches not only reduce trauma symptoms but also promote resilience, improve emotional regulation, and enhance overall mental health. Early intervention is particularly crucial for children, whose emotional well-being is often deeply affected by experiences of fear and loss. These therapeutic methods provide an essential outlet for emotional expression and help children process their experiences constructively.

Additionally, the findings address the unique challenges posed by distance learning, which has become a common mode of education during the war. While distance learning allows for continued education amid disruptions, it also exacerbates feelings of anxiety and isolation in children. The lack of real-time interaction with teachers and peers, combined with the stress of living in a conflict zone, makes it more difficult for students to maintain focus and emotional stability. This situation calls for a reassessment of educational practices during such turbulent times. It also highlights the need for developing innovative strategies to reduce anxiety and create a supportive learning environment.

The relevance of this article extends beyond the war in Ukraine. The findings are valuable for any region experiencing conflict, displacement, or significant socio-political stress. Understanding the psychological effects of war and conflict, as well as identifying effective rehabilitation strategies, is essential for building resilient communities that can recover and thrive in adversity. As the world continues to face global crises, this research provides an important framework for addressing the mental health needs of those impacted by trauma. It also underscores the significance of early intervention and comprehensive therapeutic support in promoting long-term well-being.



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