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Andreyanna Ivanchenko,
*Doctor of Psychology, associate professor,
 Educational-Scientific Institute of International Relations and Social Sciences,
 Interregional Academy of Personnel Management,
 2, Frometivska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine,*

Oleksandr Timchenko,
*Doctor of Psychology, professor,
 Leading Researcher of the Laboratory of Crisis and Disasters Psychology,
 National University of Civil Protection of Ukraine,
 94, Chernyshevskaya Str., Kharkiv, Ukraine,*

Evgeniy Zaika,
*PhD (Candidate of Psychological Sciences), associate professor,
 Department of Psychology,
 V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University,
 6, Svobody square, Kharkiv, Ukraine*

HOW TO GET AROUND THE STRESS-TRAPS IN THE STUDENTS' LIFE AND AVOID THE STRESS ACUTE ANGLES

This paper aims to reveal the ways of forming the sanogenic anti-crisis person's qualities. The main socio-psychological determinants causing the students' stress (mainly, the large training load, conflicts in the group, unwillingness to study, fear of the future) and stress symptomatology (in a great part of the emotional-physiological nature: anxiety, fear, headache, lack of time, low working capacity) were identified. As it was defined, many students use spontaneously the destructive methods of stress relieving (alcohol, smoking, internet, television). A wide range of fatigue, overload and stress symptoms, arising at the interpersonal and personal level, was observed. The system of sanogenic organizational and psychological ways of stress suppression has been elaborated (i.e., Reiki recovering system, meditation, game trainings of cognitive processes).

Keywords: *stress determinants, stress resistance, sanogenous qualities, Reiki recovering system, meditation, game training of cognitive processes.*

Introduction

Nowadays the Ukrainian contemporary student youth, which is little adapted to the difficulties of an independent life with high intellectual and psychoemotional loads, not infrequently manifests the lack of desire to study, negative transformation of motivation to further professional activity, lowering of stress resistance, cardinal violation of cognitive and behavioral spheres of personality.

The process of education at higher educational institutions is becoming a kind of stress for many students. Some of them, for various reasons, cannot adapt to this life stage. The high emotional stress turns to be a constant companion of their student life. The consequence of continuous chronic stress may be transformed into a psychological burnout, neurosis, different diseases and difficulties of self-realization (Anisman, 2015; Park & DeFrank, 2018; Srivastava, et al., 2009; Shcherbatykh, 2006; Shields, et al., 2017). The resources of the young organism are gradually depleting; it begins to work at the limit of capabilities. These truly psychological difficulties are also accompanied by a lot of everyday and domestic problems: financial, housing problems, irregular nutrition, which in total has a significant impact on their physical and mental health. In this regard, it is necessary to pay a

special attention precisely to preventive anti-stress measures, which are based on the stability of person's sanogenic and anti-crisis qualities.

Aim and Tasks

Since the chronic stressful state (as a psychological phenomenon) is becoming more and more widespread in Ukraine annually covering thousands of students, we do not accidentally consider student stress as a serious threat to the nation health. The main **aim** of this research is to study the sanogenic anti-crisis personality's characteristics and qualities for creating an effective scientific system of stress prevention methods. The **objectives** of our research are as follows: (a) to identify the main socio-psychological determinants causing the students' stress, to reveal its manifestations and symptoms; (b) to identify the ways and means of leveling the negative impact of stress-crisis factors on the person's vital activity.

Research Methods

Groups of respondents

The total number of 246 Kharkiv students took part in this research of 2017-2018, namely: 127 students of the V.N. Karazin National University (identified like "students of academic universities") and 119 students of the National University of Civil Defense of Ukraine (identi-

fied like “students of universities with special learning conditions”).

Research hypothesis

The preventive work on leveling stress-crisis factors consists, firstly, of the person’s awareness of coping with a stress by means of one’s own forces, which is noted also in other studies (Sadkovyi & Timchenko, 2017; Walach, et al., 2007), and secondly, in the practical application of traditional / non-traditional relaxation-training technologies as additional but effective sanogenic means of the human organism self-recovering in order to counteract the negative stress impacts on the psychosomatic health and vital activity.

The following psychodiagnostic techniques were used in the research: Boston Stress-Resistance Test; Test for Evaluation of the Educational Stress Severity by Yu. Scherbatyh; Complex Assessment of the Stress Manifestations by Yu. Scherbatyh; V. Boyko’s Diagnostics of Communicative Tolerance (Batarshev, et al., 2007: 88-93; Shcherbatykh, 2006: 123-128, 140-142).

Research Results

The results obtained consist of the following data groups: the major determinants of stress (i.e. the factors causing it); the main forms of students’ stress; the stress-relieving ways (being identified and spontaneously used by the students). We have revealed the key socio-psychological determinants that cause the stress among the “students of universities with special learning condi-

tions” and “students of academic universities”; herewith, the digital indicators of these determinant manifestations are expressed in points (Figure 1).

The major stress-factors obstructing the adequate psychosocial adaptation of young people to the student life conditions are revealed, namely:

- 1) interpersonal – conflicts with teachers; problems with fellow students; pre-examination disturbances; post-examination dissatisfaction; the inability to adapt to the new learning environment; necessity to learn the “ballast” studying disciplines (i.e., unnecessary, uninteresting, boring, but compulsory subjects); exhausting external control; excessive personal responsibility for the study results; lack of extraneous positive approval/support; fraud and non-execution of the faculty administration obligations to students; tactlessness and authoritarian incorrectness of the faculty/university management; need to participate in useless faculty activities; illness/death of relatives; problems with family members;
- 2) financial-domestic and family – money problems (including inside the one’s family); necessity to work because of financial difficulties; anxiety as for relatives/friends (especially of those students who came from the military operation regions that take place in the east of Ukraine);
- 3) personal (i.e., mood, health and well-being) – illness/malaise; unhappy love; emotional decline; depression.

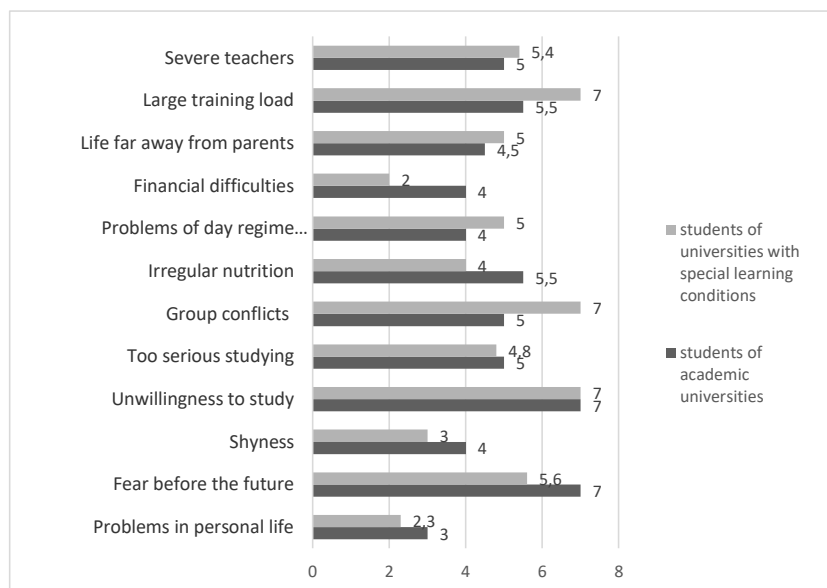


Figure 1. Main Socio-Psychological Stress Determinants

There were specially examined, studied and ranked the stress-factors directly related to the learn-

ing process and staying at the university (Figure 2):

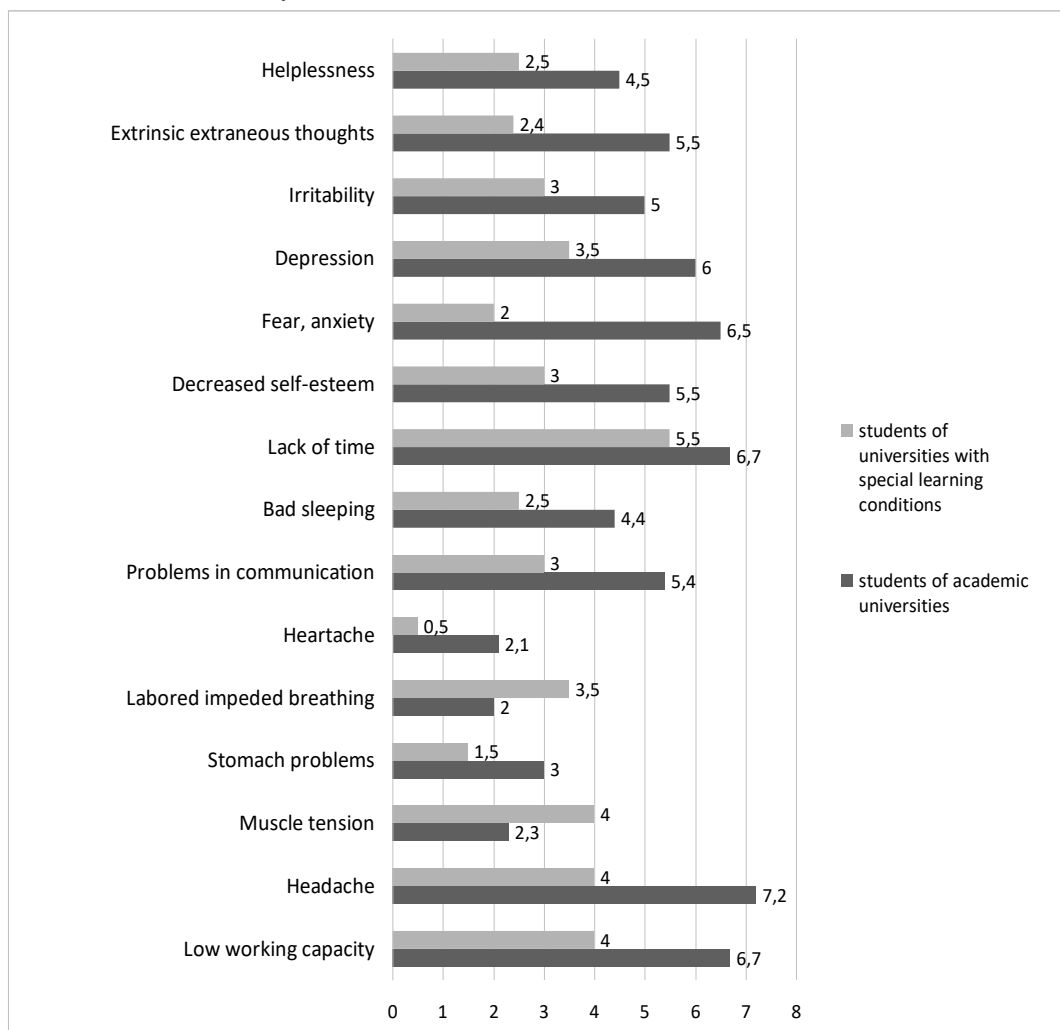


Figure 2. Manifestations of Stress Associated by the Students with Studying

Now let us characterize the main types and forms of stress manifestation: the degree of cognitive and behavioral signs, emotional and physiological symptoms of stress (Table 1). The following histogram shows the rank/degree of severity of the identified main types of stress manifestation, herewith, the number of problems and the level of stressful influence on the “students of academic universities” was significantly higher than on

Other “students of universities with special learning conditions” (Figure 3). From the data given, it follows that the vast majority of students are not adequately adapted to the life and learning difficulties. All these facts prove the need to develop practical methods to help students in enhancing their stress resistance and self-adapting to the independent life difficulties.

Table 1.

Manifestations of Stress in the Youth Student Environment Manifestations of stress

№	Cognitive	rank	Behavioral	rank	Emotional	rank	Physiological	rank
1	Negative thoughts	3-4	Loss of appetite or over-eating	2	Anxiety, anxiety	2	Pains of unclear localization	4-6
2	Concentrating difficulties	6	Errors in the usual work	11	Suspiciousness	11	Increase or decrease of blood pressure	9-11

№	Cognitive	rank	Behavioral	rank	Emotional	rank	Physiological	rank
3	Memory worsening, impairment	10	Speech changings (its acceleration/deceleration)	8-9	Gloomy, sullen, grim mood	1	Frequent, irregular heartbeat	9-11
4	Thoughts around one problem	3-4	Voice trembling	10	Gloomy, sullen, grim mood	5	Constipation or diarrhea	1
5	Distractibility	4-5	Increase conflicting situations	3	Irritability	7	Impairment of breathing freedom	9-11
6	Difficulties in decision making	7	Chronic lack of time	4	Emotional “obtuseness, stupidity”	8	Tension in muscles	12
7	Bad sleeping, nightmares	1	Communication decrease with loved persons	6	Cynical, inappropriate humor	10	Increased fatiguability	2-3
8	Frequent, repeated mistakes	11	Dirty, untidiness in appearance	8-9	Self-doubt, self-distrust	9	Trembling, convulsions in the hands	7-8
9	Passivity	2	Anti-social behavior	-	Dissatisfaction with life	3-4	Allergies, skin rashes	4-6
10	Impairment, damage of logicity	4-5	Low productivity of activities	5	Loneliness, estrangement, alienation	3-4	Increased sweating	7-8
11	Impulsiveness of thinking	8	Sleeping disturbance, insomnia	1	Loss of interest in life		Decreased immunity: colds	4-6
12	Narrowing of the “field of vision”	9	alcohol more often then usually	7	Reduced self-esteem, guilt	6	Rapid change in body weight	2-3

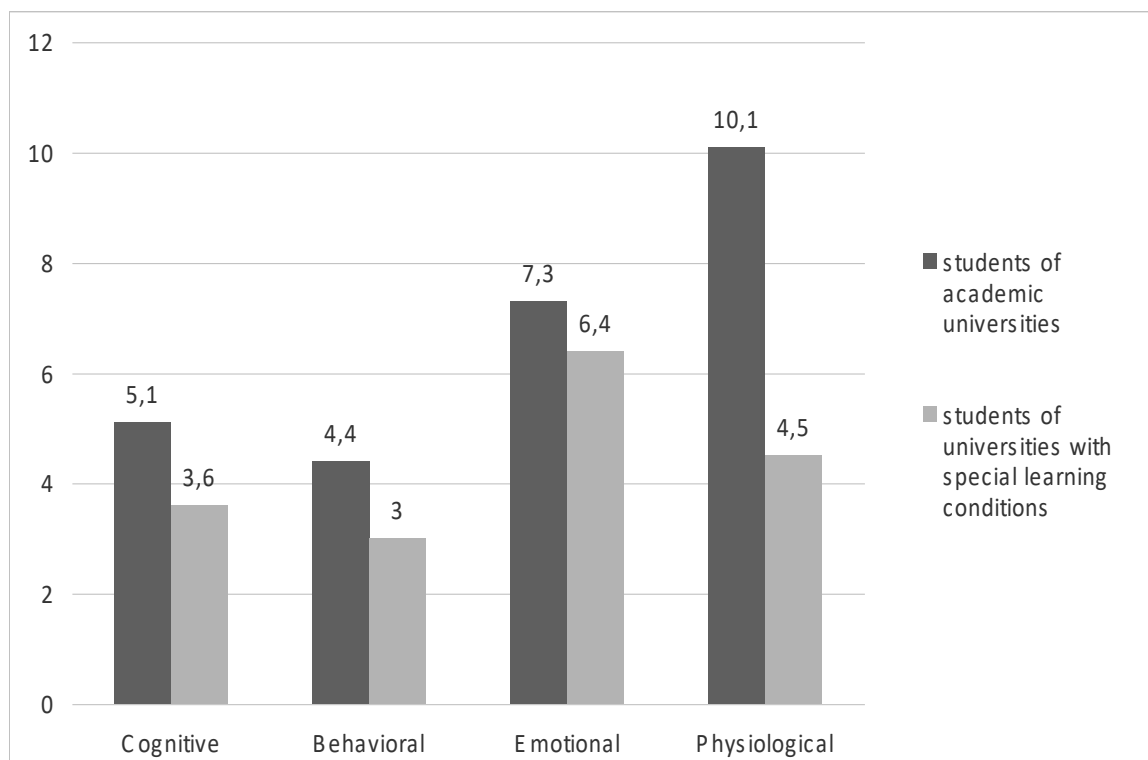


Figure 3. Symptoms of Students' Stress

There were also defined and ranked the basic techniques/means, instinctively found by the students and

spontaneously used by them to relieve the stress (Table 2):

Table 2.

Basic Techniques/Means Used by the Students to Relieve Stress

Stress relieving techniques/means	Students' group	
	"students of academic universities"	"students of universities with special learning conditions"
Sleeping	86%	94%
Alcohol	63%	9%
Watching television, internet	69%	45%
Parents' support	63%	22%
Sex	53%	12%
Cigarettes	52%	64%
Tasty food	43%	76%
Breaks during studies	43%	-
Communication with friends, loved persons	41%	89%
Walking on the open air	36%	-
Hobby	29%	50%
Physical activity and sport	29%	85%

The wide representation of ineffective, even destructive stress relieving methods, used today in the student environment, is particularly alarming (Dunai, et. al., 2012). To our great regret, such methods of stress relieving in the student's environment, like the use of alcohol and cigarettes, occupy leading positions today, while a number of natural, economical, health-preserving ways of stress prevention (travelling, trips, meditation, Yoga, Reiki, Qigong, reading, dancing, music, etc.) attract a minimum of their attention. Thus, the majority of students do not have effective means of leveling out the stress, which is, unfortunately, very evident in the student environment both by its determinating factors and by its manifestation types, forms, expressions.

Discussion

In the process of research, the students had a wide range of the fatigue, overload and stress symptoms, arising both at the interpersonal and personal levels, with which they often try to fight not in the best way, resorting to unhealthy, even antisocial means. To bypass the "traps" of stress and avoiding their "acute angles" one can use not only different kinds of sports, art, travelling and a wide range of well-known anti-stress means, but also the some other measures which we are going to suggest.

Based on the long time experience in our practical work with students, and taking also into account the researching results described in the literature, we propose the following main ways of preventing these stressful conditions and strengthening the sanogenic anti-stress qualities of the individual. The effectiveness of some of them is confirmed in the state of the art scientific literature (Amirova, et al., 2017; Ragsdale, et al., 2011; Sonnentag, et al., 2009; Walach, et al., 2007; West, et al., 2017). These preventive ways were divided into two qualitatively different groups. The first one includes the measures aimed at the rational organization of life, effective communication and educational university process of the students. And in the second one – the specially devel-

oped and already tested by us psychological methods of increasing stress-resistance, namely, Reiki self-recovering system, meditation, game trainings on the development of cognitive processes and creative life-orientation (Ivanchenko, 2017: 155-182; Ivanchenko & Zaika, 2017). These preventive ways include the following means:

A. Anti-stress organizational means:

1) the introduction of morning/evening studying time and a stable schedule in the academic plan (for example, certain groups of students can daily attend classes before afternoon, and the other ones study after lunch);

2) the conducting of lectures in a dialogue and game forms helps to apply in practice the knowledge gained, to concentrate the students' attention on a particular problem and to create a friendly atmosphere within the "teacher-students" dyad;

3) a modern classroom arrangement: providing classrooms with homogeneous lighting and furniture of increased comfort, choosing their colors in accordance with its influence on the psycho-emotional sphere of a person;

4) a variety of food assortment in cafes/canteens rich in vitamins/minerals: fruit, fresh dairy products, freshly squeezed juice and other useful dishes;

5) the creation of recreation areas that allow to rest, relax, calm down, recover after a hard day's training;

6) the carrying out of certain workshops on the increase of stress resistance;

7) the conducting of table games and other recreational activities at the universities/departments and student residences during extra-curricular time;

8) the increase in a number of outside activities: the time spent in the open air (outside the city or in the forests/fields) improves the memory and general activity, heals the body and enrich it with oxygen.

B. Properly psychological methods of stress relieving:

i. Reiki self-recovering system. It promotes the harmonization of internal bioenergy and represents a set of measures aimed at self-recovering of the psycho-

bioenergetic body balance, which is a powerful effective technology (and even a basis!) for the integral personality's development, namely: for the perfection of thinking, intellect and manifestation of dynamically growing creative life-orientation. The intellection and creative life-orientation act like a source, base and driving forces in the system "PERSON-PERSON'S LIFE JOURNEY" (relative to an individual) and in the system "GOOD-HARMONY-CREATION" (applied to the whole world). It should be emphasized that, while using the ancient East Asian techniques/arts of the organism self-recovering (Yoga, Reiki, Qigong, etc.), a tangible mental relaxation, normalization of psychosomatics and increased person's psycho-resistance appear with the great evidence. This is due to the fact that, on the one hand, there is a state of deep rest and complete relaxing: the individual consciousness of a person is completely drawn to itself and its universal dimension. On the other hand, the internal bioenergetic reserves and unhindered energy circulation in the human body are activated: the free passing of the energy flow permits to regulate the body functioning at the biochemical, neurodynamic, somophysiological levels, simultaneously producing positive emotions in the psyche. The Reiki system/techniques provides the same, catalysing an internal positivity: herewith, the instinctive aspiration to prolong this feeling in a maximum way activates, forming specific "creativity dependence", i.e. a person enters a permanent state of emotional, energetic and biophysiological necessity to stay with this increased vitality as long as possible (Ivanchenko & Zaika, 2017: 303-360).

ii. Transcendental Maharishi Meditation (TMM). The transcendental meditation is effective, too. It is a simple, natural mental procedure that is based on the ancient traditions of Tibetan and Indian yogis. The TMM is practiced during 15-20 minutes, it is easily trained in several days. Nowadays, more than 6 million people in more than 100 countries around the world have been trained in the TMM. The results of TMM studying are presented in a number of foreign scientific works and demonstrate its evident positive influence on the psyche and human behavior, and the influence like that is, to some extent, total affecting various aspects of person's life activity (from time of human reaction and hearing acuteness to the level of self-actualization and ability to convince in communication). The analysis of TMM results shows its positive effect on perception, memory, thinking, imagination, intelligence, helps to reduce negative emotions and enhance the professional performance (Ivanchenko & Zaika, 2017: 364-386).

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iii. Game trainings of cognitive processes and creative life-orientation disclosure. The system of trainings developed by us includes more than 20 different blocks of games/exercises, every of which provides a tangible enhance of specific aspects of the child/student cognitive sphere (Ivanchenko & Zaika, 2017: 227-301; Sadkovyi & Timchenko, 2017). So, in the logical thinking training the following games are used: the sentence compilation from three unrelated words; the search for common signs for two or three subjects; the classification of objects for different reasons; the formulation of types for all familiar objects; the expression of a given thought in other words; the search of possible event causes, and others. Similarly, the training is carrying out on the development of logical memory, imagination, self-regulation which are aimed at improving the cognitive processes.

The ancient East Asian techniques of body self-recovering and various developmental trainings (which promotion should be increased because of their positive effect) contribute to improving the overall integral state of the brain, health, activity, nervous regulation of the body metabolism, activation of special anti-stress hormones and provide increased mental capacity and self-efficacy, development of the person's intellectual and emotional spheres, cognitive processes and the disclosure of creative life-orientation, enhancing at the same time individual stress resistance in difficult life and learning situations.

Conclusions

1. Contemporary Ukrainian students are experiencing great stress in connection with life and educational problems. These problems have a wide range of determinants (associated with everyday life, communication, learning) and an extensive set of manifestations (cognitive, behavioral, emotional and physiological). However, students do not use effective means of reducing stress.

2. We propose a system of measures aimed to improve and perfect the sanogenic anti-crisis qualities of the individual, which underlie stress-resistance. These means include two groups: organizational (everyday domestic and related to the study process organization) and just psychological measures (Reiki recovering system, meditation and game training of cognitive processes).

Our further research works are going to cover: (a) the study of psycho-somophysiological resistance of different age and ethnic categories of respondents; (b) the proving of positive impact of the ancient East Asian stress prevention techniques on the vital activity of the individual made with more detailed statistics.

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Андрейна Іванченко,

доктор психологічних наук, доцент,

Навчально-науковий інститут міжнародних відносин та соціальних наук,

Міжрегіональна Академія управління персоналом,

вул. Фрометівська, 2, м. Київ, Україна,

Олександр Тімченко,

доктор психологічних наук, професор,

Науково-дослідна лабораторія екстремальної та кризової психології,

Національний університет цивільного захисту України,

вул. Чернишевська, 94, м. Харків, Україна,

Євген Зайка,

кандидат психологічних наук, доцент,

Харківський національний університет імені В.Н. Каразіна,

площа Свободи, 6, м. Харків, Україна

ЯК ОБИЙТИ ПАСТКИ СТРЕСІВ СТУДЕНТСЬКОГО ЖИТТЯ ТА УНИКНУТИ ЇХНІХ ГОСТРИХ КУТІВ

Стаття націлена на рішення актуального питання: виявлення шляхів формування саногенних протикризових якостей особистості, що наразі особливо важливо для студентського контингенту. У ході дослідження застосовувався ряд психодіагностичних методик: Бостонський тест на стресостійкість; тест оцінки виразності навчального стресу; комплексна оцінка проявів стресу; діагностика комунікативної толерантності. Загальна кількість респондентів, що прийняли участь у дослідженнях 2017-2018 років, склала 246 студентів українських університетів. Встановлено й ранжирувано головні стрес-фактори, що перешкоджають адекватній психосоціалній адаптації молоді до умов студентського життя: міжособистісні, фінансово-побутові й сімейні, персонально-особистісні. Було визначено основні соціально-психологічні детермінанти, що викликають у студентів стрес (серед яких превалюють: велике навчальне навантаження, конфлікти в групі, небажання вчитися, страх перед майбутнім) і розкрито симптомокомплекс стресу (переважно емоційно-фізіологічного характеру: тривога, страх, головні болі, недостача часу, низька працездатність). Як показало дослідження, сучасні українські студенти відчувають великі стреси у зв'язку з життєвими і навчальними проблемами. Ці проблеми мають широке коло детермінантів (пов'язаних з побутом, спілкуванням, навчанням) і великий набір проявів (когнітивні, поведінкові, емоційні й фізіологічні). Виявлено, що студенти спонтанно використовують деструктивні/недійові прийоми зняття стресової напруги (алкоголь, паління, інтернет, телебачення). Розроблено систему саногенних протикризових способів зменшення стресу: організаційні (побутові та пов'язані з організацією навчального процесу) і психологічні (система самооздоровлення Рейкі, медитація та ігрові тренінги пізнавальних процесів), які сприяють поліпшенню інтегрального стану мозку, здоров'я, самоефективності, а також – розвитку можливостей для оптимального функціонування когнітивної сфери, пізнавальних процесів, розкриття власної життєздійснювальної креативності людини, а разом з тим і підвищення стресостійкості у важких життєвих і навчальних ситуаціях.

Ключові слова: детермінанти стресу, стресостійкість, саногенні якості, система самооздоровлення Рейкі, медитація, ігрові тренінги пізнавальних процесів.

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