



Eating behavior during wartime

Division of NPA "Psychology of eating behavior", the main goals of which are to promote: conducting research activities, psychodiagnostics in the field of psychology of eating behavior; prevention of the development of eating disorder; carrying out professional training, improving the qualifications of psychologists who provide psychological assistance to people with deviant eating behavior, etc.

In connection with the full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine, to help people with eating disorders, a team of authors has developed the first issue of the "Eating disorder in Conditions of War" free of charge. On 07/27/2022, his presentation took place, at which more than 40 colleagues took part in the event and the subsequent discussion of the work. Covers the following topics: human behavior as a target of hybrid warfare; stress and its effect on eating behavior; features of nutrition during stress; self-help techniques in war conditions. After the presentation, the division team announced the launch of a free support group on the topic of eating disorders. Every two weeks to this day, the support group is attended by people who have experienced difficulties with their relationship with food, and visitors report that they find it a resource for further recovery.

Colleagues of the division closely monitor that the mass media do not manipulate professional terminology during the war and call on news authors to be responsible for the use of professional medical and psychological terminology, to avoid making general diagnoses based on subjective judgment.

When news appeared in the mass media about the return of Ukrainian soldiers who were in Russian captivity, news outlets wrote, quote: "almost all 215 released from captivity have an extreme degree of anorexia" - the following is a reference to the words of the head of the patronage service "Azov" by Olena Tolkacheva. Psychologists of the division prepared a material in which they explained that the term "anorexia" in relation to discharged soldiers is absolutely incorrect. Unfortunately, many people do not have a complete idea of what anorexia is, and often believe that this disease is the result of malnutrition and/or a wrong lifestyle.

In the scientific literature, the concept of anorexia is interpreted as an eating disorder, which is accompanied by increased psychological fears of a person to gain excessive body weight. This is a psychophysiological disease characterized primarily by a psychological disturbance of a person's physiological state due to



a distorted perception of his body image. The behavior of a person suffering from anorexia comes down to self-consciously limiting portions of their food or completely avoiding food, performing exhausting physical exercises against this background, taking drugs for weight loss, etc. Such behavior can be provoked by various biological, psychological or social factors.

These are really serious (yet treatable) mental and physical illnesses that can affect people of any gender, age, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, body shape, or weight. Establishing the diagnosis of "anorexia" takes place with the participation of psychiatrists, who in turn rely on the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) in their work, where the diagnostic criteria for establishing this diagnosis are clearly indicated.

It is obvious that Ukrainian soldiers released from captivity did not have a purposeful goal of losing weight due to psychological fears of gaining excess weight. That is, their exhausted physical condition is a consequence of the terrible, inhumane conditions of captivity, often forced periodic hunger and insufficient nutrition, the diet of which they could not influence. They did not choose these conditions. Therefore, the term "extreme degree of anorexia" is absolutely incorrect and has no relation to the released heroes.

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