# EMOTIONAL BURNOUT SYNDROME: PREVENTION, PECULIARITIES OF COUNSELING IN THE REALITIES OF LARGE-SCALE MILITARY AGGRESSION (UKRAINIAN EXPERIENCE)

# SÍNDROME DE BURNOUT EMOCIONAL: PREVENÇÃO, PECULIARIDADES DO ACONSELHAMENTO NAS REALIDADES DE AGRESSÃO MILITAR EM GRANDE ESCALA (EXPERIÊNCIA UCRANIANA)

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Abstract: The aim is to investigate the syndrome of during large-scale emotional burnout psychological aggression, the peculiarities of counseling in emergency conditions and the development of professional preventive measures to reduce the risk of emotional burnout. The relevance of the study is due to the fact that constant exposure to stressful conditions caused by the Russian-Ukrainian war negatively affects the psycho-emotional state of the individual. The study continued during the second semester of the 2022-2023 academic years in philosophical, general scientific, empirical research methods were used. In the results indicators of emotional burnout of individuals who have been affected by large-scale military aggression were identified. The phases and symptoms of emotional burnout were studied. The need to provide psychological support to individuals who have emotional burnout syndrome or are approaching it is identified. The scientific novelty of the work consists in the study of the syndrome of the specificity of the formation of emotional elevation from the point of view of an eyewitness of Russian aggression and a listener. In the conclusions of the study preventive measures to reduce the risk of developing sensitive cheerfulness syndrome were developed.

**Keywords:** Emotional Exhaustion. Emotional Stress. Negative Psycho-Emotional State. Resistance. Russian-Ukrainian War.

**Resumo:** O objetivo é investigar a síndrome do esgotamento emocional durante uma agressão militar em grande escala, as peculiaridades do aconselhamento psicológico em condições de emergência e o desenvolvimento de medidas preventivas profissionais para reduzir o risco de esgotamento emocional. A relevância do estudo deve-se ao facto de a exposição constante a condições de stress causadas pela guerra russo-ucraniana afetar negativamente o

estado psico-emocional do indivíduo. O estudo prosseguiu durante o segundo semestre dos anos académicos de 2022-2023 na Ucrânia. Foram utilizados métodos de investigação filosóficos, científicos gerais e empíricos. Nos resultados, foram identificados indicadores de esgotamento emocional de indivíduos que foram afectados por agressões militares em grande escala. Foram estudadas as fases e os sintomas do esgotamento emocional. Identificou-se a necessidade de prestar apoio psicológico aos indivíduos que sofrem de síndroma de esgotamento emocional ou que se estão a aproximar dela. A novidade científica do trabalho consiste no estudo da síndrome da especificidade da formação da elevação emocional do ponto de vista de uma testemunha ocular da agressão russa e de um ouvinte. Nas conclusões do estudo foram desenvolvidas medidas preventivas para reduzir o risco de desenvolvimento da síndrome da alegria sensível.

Palavras-chave: Exaustão emocional. Stress emocional. Estado psico-emocional negativo. Resistência. Guerra Russo-Ucraniana.

#### 1. Introduction

In the context of large-scale military aggression, a large concentration of war crimes, psychological crimes, forced emigration, etc. have a destructive impact on mental and physical health. The human body mostly reacts to stressors in the form of emotional exhaustion, which can lead to emotional burnout syndrome (BANNIKOVA, 2022). The impact of a full-scale war affects the psycho-emotional state of civilians and soldiers, but prevention and counseling should be different. Psychological support and assistance to people affected by war is energy-intensive and complex. Therefore, psychologists need to develop protection and prevention mechanisms to reduce the risk of emotional burnout syndrome. In 2022, there were 446,368 calls to the psychological service for psychosocial assistance. Constantly monitoring and discussing the news and staying in touch causes an increase in emotional stress and fatigue (ALHAFFAR et al., 2019). There are several key symptoms of emotional burnout (See Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Key symptoms of emotional burnout



Source: authors' development

Currently, there are more than 43,000 specialists in Ukraine who provide psychological support, including through the systems of the Ministry of Health, Social Policy, Education, Defense, and others. However, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, more than 200 new organizations have emerged, including professional and volunteer groups. At the same time, at the end of 2022, more than 5 regional subgroups were formed to strengthen the coordination of mental health activities at the local level. The use of various mobile applications, chatbots, and certain online services has become possible to increase the opportunities for receiving psychological assistance. In particular, the following services are important: the UkrEntity Initiative, the online platform Tell Me, the Mental Health project, Psychological help for Ukraine, the Razom initiative. International organizations also play an important role. In particular, UNFPA (the United Nations Population Fund in Ukraine) provides various levels of assistance to Ukrainians who were forced to leave their homes to escape the war. At the same time, Ukrainians who have found themselves in different European countries due to the war can receive professional psychological assistance through special hotlines of the International Organization for Migration.

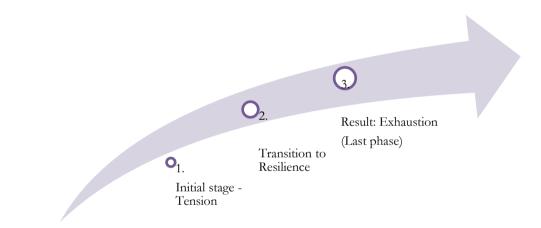
However, Ukrainians are increasingly facing emotional burnout syndrome. The study of emotional burnout syndrome is a hot topic among psychologists. However, the conditions, research design, and subject matter vary depending on the circumstances that cause emotional burnout. For the most part, emotional burnout syndrome has been studied in the context of the

work and educational process, but since 2014, another aspect of the topic has been added - the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on emotional burnout syndrome. Internationally, there is a lack of research that reveals the Ukrainian experience of preventing emotional burnout syndrome during a full-scale war. However, among Ukrainian scholars, this topic is relevant (DATSUN; DEMCHENKO, 2022). In the paper of these researchers, it is proved that emotional burnout syndrome occurs in three phases (See Figure 2).

Accordingly, the purpose of the study is to analyze the preventive measures and peculiarities of counseling extreme psychologists to overcome emotional burnout syndrome during the Russian-Ukrainian war.

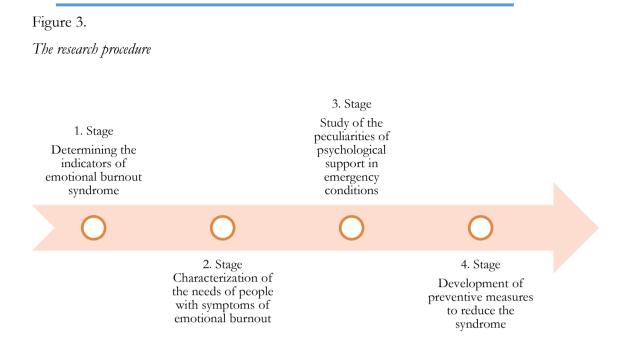
Figure 2.

Phases of emotional burnout



Source: authors' development

The realization of this goal requires the following stages: at the first stage, it is necessary to determine the indicators of emotional burnout syndrome as a result of large-scale military aggression; at the second stage, to determine the need of persons with symptoms of emotional burnout for psychological support and correction of the psycho-emotional state; at the third stage, to determine the features of psychological counseling in emergency conditions; at the fourth stage, to develop preventive measures to reduce the risk of developing emotional burnout syndrome (See Figure 3).



Source: authors' development

The analysis of programs that support psychological health has been neglected by modern researchers. In particular, as noted above, since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, a powerful network of organizations providing psychological assistance at both the national and global levels has been formed. Accordingly, it has become possible to use various mobile applications, chatbots, and certain online services. In particular, support programs such as the UkrEntity Initiative, Tell Me, the Mental Health project, Psychological help for Ukraine, the Razom initiative, the Hugs support program, and others are important. However, despite this, the process of overcoming emotional burnout is very individual. Accordingly, the development of a strategy to overcome emotional burnout and change attitudes should be developed individually.

# 2. Theoretical framework and literature review

Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine has a negative impact not only on the security and territorial integrity of the state but also on the psycho-emotional state of the people. Prolonged exposure to negative psychological states (including fear, panic, anxiety, frustration, stress, etc.) can lead to post-traumatic disorders. Emotional stress causes emotional burnout syndrome (VOJVODIĆ et al., 2019). Scientists emphasized that emotional burnout occurs due

to the inability to apply practices to overcome negative psychological states in the internal and external environment. In their study of the emotional burnout syndrome, VOJVODIĆ et al. (2019) noted that only 10.9% of military personnel have a moderate level of emotional burnout. The remaining 81.9% are able to apply protective tools that reduce anxiety, stress, and improve quality of life. According to FREEDMAN and TUVAL MASHIACH (2018), post-traumatic disorders and emotional burnout syndrome can occur under the influence of direct or indirect effects. Under direct influence, a person experiences the effects of disturbing realities on themselves. Under the indirect influence, a person indirectly experiences them. In a full-scale war, post-traumatic disorders and emotional burnout syndrome are common phenomena that require psychological counseling and support. FREEDMAN and TUVAL MASHIACH (2018) noted the conditions under which ordinary realities become a shared traumatic reality. According to this, the Russian aggression against Ukraine traumatizes the entire civil society, it creates a reality. A psychologist in such circumstances is doubly affected, as he or she experiences the consequences of full-scale aggression and helps people who have been devastated by it (FREEDMAN; TUVAL MASHIACH, 2018).

BOSKO (2022) analyzed the problematic issues of emotional burnout of psychologists working in emergency conditions. The author concluded that the development of preventive measures to eliminate emotional burnout cannot be universal, since each emotional burnout occurs on the basis of different post-traumatic traumas.

# 3. Research design and methods

The study used philosophical, general scientific, and empirical research methods. The research design is based on the principles of objectivity, comprehensiveness, specificity, logic, and systematicity. Among the philosophical methods used were: dialectical, analytical, hermeneutical, and synergistic. The dialectical method was used to consider other views of scholars on the problem under study. Using the analytical method, the subject of research was divided into components, and tasks were defined. The hermeneutic method was used to analyze scientific texts for the interpretation of the psycho-emotional state under the influence of stress factors. The synergistic approach allowed us to identify the problem and establish the relationship between negative psycho-emotional state → post-traumatic disorder → emotional stress → resistance → emotional burnout.

The following general scientific methods of cognition were used: analysis and synthesis, deduction, system analysis, and generalization. Analysis and synthesis were used in the development of the theoretical framework of the study since emotional burnout syndrome was studied in the context of emotions, self-esteem, psyche, and intelligence. Emotional burnout affects all of these areas. Using a systematic analysis, the indicators of emotional burnout during the Russian-Ukrainian war were determined. Using the method of statistical analysis, the need for correction of the psycho-emotional state of people with emotional burnout was established. Using the method of observation and evaluation of expert opinions, the peculiarities of psychological counseling in emergency conditions were determined. The method of deduction was used in the development of preventive measures to reduce the development of emotional burnout. The method of generalization was used to identify the main theses that characterize the study. The graphical method was used to visualize and systematize the results obtained.

The study used the methodology of V. Boyko, who considered three phases and their symptoms in the system of emotional burnout (BOYKO, 2003). Four symptoms are identified in each phase. This became the basis for the results obtained. The theoretical basis of the study is based on the works of Ukrainian and foreign scholars, as well as statistical data from official web resources. International databases were used in writing the article: Scopus, Web of Sciences, Journal for free, WorldCat, Open DOAR. The theoretical basis of the study was developed using the following ranking method.

#### 4. Results

Personal development and a stable psycho-emotional state depend on internal and external factors. Internal factors include the personal level of motivation, socialization, and activity, which depends on biological heredity, collective and individual experience, and social environment. Accordingly, external factors, including the environment in which an individual lives, can affect the psychological state (See Table 1).

Table 1. Internal and external factors that influence the psycho-emotional state of a person

	The personal level of motivation  Lifestyle	
Internal factors		
	Features of communication	
	Biological heredity	
	Collective and individual	
	experience	
	Demographic factors	
External factors	Economic level	
	Natural features	
	Scientific and technological	
	development	
	Political factors	

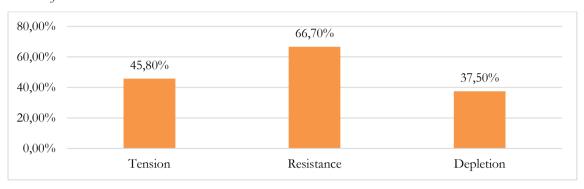
Source: authors' development

It is difficult to control the consequences of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, and more than 68,000 war crimes have been registered (RADIOSVOBODA, 2023). Being in such an environment blocks the energy center, Muladhara, which is responsible for vital physiological needs and stability in life. The blockage of the chakra occurs due to fear for one's own life, the safety of relatives and friends, the possibility of losing a job, unemployment, the risk of losing movable property, getting injured, etc. This, in turn, leads to various problems on physical (weight gain/loss, urinary incontinence, constipation, pelvic pain, etc.) and psychological (depression, anxiety disorders, distraction, lethargy, low self-esteem) levels.

KRAVETS et al. (2023) analyzed the level of emotional burnout syndrome in martial law conditions on the example of students who experience stress, anxiety, depression, dissatisfaction with their lives and themselves, are in a difficult, hopeless situation, inadequately respond to circumstances, are indifferent to professional and personal development, try to interact less with people and preserve emotions. The results of the study are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4.

Phases of emotional burnout



Source: (Kravets et al., 2023).

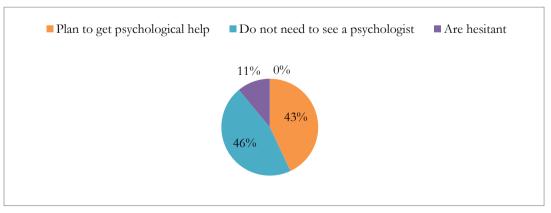
According to the results, 66.7% of respondents are in the phase of resistance, which indicates attempts to counteract stress factors, but the level of stress and exhaustion remains average. However, it should be emphasized that 37.5% are in the last phase - exhaustion.

The results obtained by the authors indicate low-stress resistance and perception of the negative factors of war, which are reflected in the psychological state and emotional burnout.

High rates of emotional burnout syndrome during large-scale military aggression indicate a need for psychological support. However, according to GRADUS (2022), 43% plan to get psychological help, 46% do not need to see a psychologist, and the remaining 11% are hesitant (See Figure 5).

Figure 5.

Diagram of Ukrainians' attitude to psychological support



Source: (GRADUS, 2022).

This is due to the fact that half of the respondents do not realize the consequences of emotional burnout syndrome and are convinced that their problems are not so serious (31%) and they can cope with them on their own (26%). According to the survey, respondents believe that psychological support is most needed by combatants (51%) and people who have lost a loved one (48%). It should be noted that a person's mental state can adapt to conditions of varying complexity, but this does not exclude the indirect impact of stressors on the human body, which eventually affects psychological and physical health. In this context, it is important to seek the help of qualified specialists during large-scale military aggression. Accordingly, focusing on the development of the physical and mental health of Ukrainian society, we should focus on urgent psychological support.

During large-scale armed aggression, psychologists and psychotherapists have different groups of people who have suffered from the destructive effects of war. Accordingly, approaches, methods, and solutions should be adapted specifically to the symptoms and needs of the victim. Thus, specialists provide assistance to the following groups: military personnel, veterans, families of military personnel and veterans, military personnel who were captured, people with serious combat injuries, civilians with post-traumatic disorders, and emotional burnout. The peculiarity of psychological counseling is that a specialist needs to find an individual approach to each person and establish contact and trust. Therefore, we believe that counseling should be in the format of a light conversation, without pressure or forcing to talk. During counseling, a psychologist should keep the conversation friendly and not judge the victim. The specialist should take into account the client's values and norms and not give advice on how to solve the problem. The information received during counseling should be confidential. When providing psychological assistance, a professional should distinguish between psychological and personal relationships. That is, it is important for a psychologist not to transfer the client's trauma to his or her personal life: counseling can be conducted under any conditions. An effective tool for preventing emotional burnout syndrome is the diagnosis and psychological support. At the same time, the implementation of personal strategies and psychological support is an effective means of prevention. We propose to consider preventive measures in terms of the functioning of human energy centers (See Table 2).

Table 2.

Prevention of emotional burnout syndrome

|--|

Muladhara	Fear	More physical activity
Swadhistana	Feeling of guilt	Be energized through interaction
		with other people
Manipur	Shame, anger	Help people, support them
Anahata	Grief, self-pity	Engage more in creative activities
		(dance, music, visual arts, theater,
		etc.)
Vishudha	Lying	Communicate more, speak in
		public
Ajna	Absent-mindedness	Practice yoga, meditation
Sahasrara	No	-

Source: authors' development

So, if an individual feels fear and guilt, we recommend doing more physical activity and interacting with other people. At the same time, when people feel ashamed or angry, they should start helping other people (either in the family or even strangers). In order to overcome grief and self-pity, it is worth starting to engage in various creative practices. In particular, we are talking about developing your dance, music, and artistic abilities and skills. If an individual feels distracted and delusional, it is worth meditating and communicating more with the environment.

#### 5. Discussion

The results demonstrate that diagnosis and psychological support are important tools for preventing emotional burnout syndrome. This opinion is shared by other modern researchers. In particular, TANASIICHUK (2019) noted that the implementation of personal strategies and psychological support is an effective means of preventing emotional burnout.

At the same time, it is worth paying attention to the main internal causes that lead to emotional burnout. They are usually related to temperament and character traits (BERNSTEIN, 2019; CHIKUVADZE, 2023). According to HELKAVAARA (2021), the internal factors of emotional burnout are also related to certain habits and attitudes towards everyday, personal, and work life, which can be changed if desired.

For this reason, we can identify other important factors that modern authors have not focused on. In particular, excessive isolation and the inability to express both positive and negative emotions are important. If an individual accumulates a lot of negative emotions and

experiences and does not share his or her thoughts, this can lead to constant stress and emotional tension. On the other hand, an important internal factor is a high level of self-criticism, self-doubt, and low self-esteem. At the same time, we believe that another important factor in the emotional burnout syndrome is poor communication skills.

Some modern authors, such as KAUR and MALODIA (2013), believe that the inability to communicate and resolve conflicts affects the emergence of emotional burnout. Therefore, in their opinion, people are exposed to certain psychological problems in conflict. Another important factor in the emergence of this syndrome is the presence of internal conflicts (for example, unwillingness to do certain work, the disproportion of personal goals and opportunities, etc.).

According to modern scientific works (BERNSTEIN, 2019; ALHAFFAR et al., 2019), a continuous complex pessimistic attitude to life, the habit of thinking about people and certain events in a negative context, and the inability to appreciate the present and see the positive aspects also contribute to the emergence of various psychological problems.

The study results show that the vast majority of Ukrainians (66.7%) are in the resistance phase, which indicates attempts to counteract stress factors, but the level of stress and exhaustion remains average. Thus, one-third is in the last phase - exhaustion. These data are confirmed in other contemporary studies. In particular, the study by BOSKO (2022) records emotional burnout syndrome in 87.3% of those who have emotional exhaustion, feel lonely, nervous, and angry. The study by KHIZHNYAK et al. (2023) analyzed the level of burnout syndrome among students before the war and during large-scale military aggression. Accordingly, the level of stress before/after the war was 63.4%. However, after the war, this figure rose to 74.2% (an increase of 10.8). Before the war, 40.7% were in a state of resistance. After the war - 33.5 (a decrease of 7.2). At the same time, the rate of exhaustion increased by 37.8%. From 23.1% to 60.7%.

The results also highlight the main aspects of preventing emotional burnout syndrome. Modern authors also emphasize that physical activity improves the mental state of individuals (BOSKO, 2022; GARROSA; MORENO-JIMÉNEZ, 2012). At the same time, self-regulation methods and meditation also remain important. Ch. R. Chase (2018), studying Chinese medicine, argued that clinical experiments can assess diseases of human organ systems, the neuroendocrine system, and personal qualities (both positive and negative) associated with each chakra. The scientist also emphasized that the long-term experience of negative emotions leads to the development of diseases. RUNNING et al. (2022) emphasized that connecting with the chakra

system for 20 minutes every day will reduce stress and anxiety. Since emotional burnout syndrome is a depletion of our emotional balance, it is necessary to fill the energy centers for uninterrupted energy circulation. This, in turn, will improve the psycho-emotional state and reduce the level of diseases.

These statements about the peculiarities of preventing emotional burnout syndrome have been confirmed in other works. In particular, modern authors agree with the idea that in an emergency, stressful situations, negative emotions should be released (GRADUS, 2022; RAZA; HUSSAIN, 2022). This can be solved through active physical activity. As a result, this will help reduce physical and moral stress, and certain objective changes will occur within the human body. At the same time, with systematic physical activity, the body will recover both physically and emotionally. At the same time, it is worth finding an individual way to safely release negative thoughts and feelings. We believe that this is especially relevant and important in times of war. Thus, modern authors unanimously emphasize that it is worth sharing certain emotional experiences with friends or loved ones, discussing difficult work situations with colleagues, or consulting a psychologist about aspects that need to be addressed.

#### 6. Conclusion

Emotional burnout syndrome is a multi-dimensional, dynamic phenomenon that develops rapidly under stressful circumstances and poses a psychological and physical threat to the life of an individual. The design of the study has limitations, which consist in an analytical review of the indicators of emotional burnout during large-scale military aggression on the example of the results of experimental studies by other scientists and official web resources on statistics. However, the described indicators of emotional burnout syndrome can be changed and supplemented by the results of field research. It should be noted that emotional burnout syndrome has three phases: emotional stress, resistance, and emotional exhaustion. Depending on the stage of development, the indicators of emotional burnout will differ.

The authors have established the direct and indirect impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the psycho-emotional state of the individual. The result of long-term large-scale military aggression is the development of negative psychological states (anxiety, fear, apathy, depression, anger, hatred, panic, frustration, etc.), which further leads to the emergence of post-traumatic disorders. Long-term exposure to such conditions causes emotional burnout syndrome. The

study found a high level of emotional burnout: 45.8% of respondents feel stressed, 66.7% are in a state of resistance, and 37.5% are emotionally exhausted.

It was found that the negative impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war requires psychological counseling and support. However, not all victims of emotional burnout syndrome are ready to seek professional help. The features of psychological counseling were identified and it was emphasized that a psychologist or psychotherapist must adhere to ethical rules based on a friendly, non-judgmental attitude towards the client and preservation of anonymity. Preventive measures have been developed to minimize the risks of developing emotional burnout syndrome associated with the work of energy centers. However, the analysis of the main ways to optimize recovery from emotional burnout in the context of military events or other emergencies remains a promising area for research.

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