

У перспективі вважаємо за необхідне дослідити роботу студентських служб університетів США з іншими вразливими категоріями осіб та можливості імплементації позитивних практик у роботу закладів вищої освіти України.

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### LEVELS OF FORMATION OF MEDIATOR COMPETENCE OF FUTURE SOCIAL WORKERS

**Abstract.** *This publication analyzes the development of mediator competence in future social workers through the lens of its formation levels, aiming to prepare these professionals to perform mediation functions in conflict resolution. The main criteria for the levels of formation of mediator competence (cognitive, communicative, emotional, and practical) of future social sphere professionals are identified.*

**Keywords:** *social worker, mediator competence, level of mediator competence formation, conflict parties, readiness for mediation.*

Social work, as a professional activity, plays a crucial role in supporting vulnerable population groups, resolving conflicts, and promoting social harmony. In today's world, due to economic, cultural, and globalization challenges, social interactions are becoming more complex, and the profession of a social worker requires new competencies [2, p.97]. One key competency is mediator competence, which enables professionals to act as intermediaries in conflict situations, foster constructive dialogue, and find mutually beneficial solutions.

Assessing the mediator competence of future social workers involves determining its levels of formation, which not only helps understand the degree of readiness of professionals to perform mediation functions in specific conflicts but also aids in developing effective strategies for professional growth. The levels of mediator competence formation are based on specific criteria, considering components such as cognitive, communicative, emotional, and practical.

To determine the levels of mediator competence formation, the following main criteria should be highlighted:

- cognitive component (knowledge and understanding) - the level of theoretical understanding of mediation, the ability to analyze conflict situations, and justify strategy choices;
- communicative component (communication effectiveness) – the ability to clearly express thoughts, actively listen, and avoid confrontation;
- emotional component (emotional maturity) – the degree of self-control, empathy, and ability to create a comfortable atmosphere for both conflict parties;
- practical component (practical readiness) – skills in organizing the mediation process, finding compromises, and implementing agreements.

The levels of mediator competence formation directly depend on the quality of professional training of future social workers [3]. These criteria form the basis

for classifying levels, each characterized by specific manifestations of mediator competence.

When speaking about the first, or low level, it is observed that the future social worker has somewhat superficial knowledge about mediation, limited understanding of its principles, and poorly developed practical skills. In this case, the communication of the social worker is often one-sided, with insufficient attention to the needs of the conflict parties, and emotional maturity is manifested episodically, while self-control can be lost in stressful situations [1]. For example, a future specialist with a low level of formation in a practical mediation session may not notice the hidden causes of a conflict between spouses and propose a template solution that does not take into account their emotional states. At the low level, training is usually limited to theoretical lectures without sufficient practical component.

The medium level of formation of mediator skills is observed when the higher education applicant has adequately mastered the theoretical foundations of mediation and basic skills of their application. The future social worker is capable of establishing dialogue, listening to the parties, and partially analyzing the situation, but their actions may lack systematization. In such a case, emotional stability is present, however, empathy is manifested selectively, and in difficult situations, the specialist may neglect the status of neutrality. For example, during the simulation of a conflict in the community, a future specialist with a medium level of formation may organize negotiations between the parties, but may not always be able to find a compromise due to a lack of flexibility in approaches. The medium level is achieved in the presence of basic trainings and simulation tasks, but without deep immersion into real cases.

The high level of formation of mediator competence is characterized by a deep understanding of mediation processes, the ability to apply knowledge in practice, and high communication effectiveness [1]. The social worker demonstrates developed empathy, stable self-control, and the ability to maintain neutrality even in tense situations. Practical skills allow them not only to resolve conflicts but also to prevent their occurrence. For example, while working with a group of internally displaced persons, a specialist with a high level of formation can quickly identify the source of tension, organize a constructive dialogue, and help the parties reach a mutually beneficial solution, taking into account their cultural features. The high level requires an integrative approach: a combination of theoretical learning, practical exercises, internships, and reflection.

Thus, the training programs for future social workers and their mastering of mediator competence should be focused on the gradual development of all components of competence, with an emphasis on the practical application of knowledge. This, in turn, will serve as a guideline for assessing the readiness of future social workers to perform mediation functions, determining the degree of formation of mediator competence, and improving professional training.

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### **USING ICT TOOLS TO ENHANCE TRAINING OF JUNIOR BORDER GUARD SERVICE INSPECTORS**

*The author raises the issue of using innovative technologies to develop the professional competence of junior border guard service inspectors. Currently, information and communication technologies are being actively introduced into*