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SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN IN SITUATIONS OF PARENTAL LOSS OR DIVORCE

The author presents an overview of the psychological challenges children face in situations of parental loss or divorce and highlights the need for timely socio-psychological support. Attention is paid to key components of effective intervention, including crisis counseling, emotional expression, and family therapy. The study emphasizes integrative, child-centered approaches and discusses barriers such as stigma, lack of resources, and institutional gaps. Future prospects include scalable programs, digital tools, and culturally adapted practices to improve support systems.

Keywords: *parental loss, divorce, socio-psychological support, child resilience, emotional development*

In modern society, the family plays a central role in the emotional and psychological development of children. However, increasing rates of divorce, separation, and parental mortality create a significant number of children growing up in non-traditional or disrupted family environments. The psychological consequences of parental loss or divorce often include heightened levels of anxiety, feelings of abandonment, difficulties with identity formation, and lowered academic or social performance. These challenges are particularly acute during key developmental stages, where the absence of a stable parental presence can disrupt emotional security and the development of trust.

While the effects of family breakdown have been extensively researched, there remains a lack of comprehensive socio-psychological frameworks for providing early and effective intervention to children facing such crises. In many countries, including post-conflict or economically strained societies, the systems

of psychosocial support are either underdeveloped or inconsistently implemented [1, p. 123]. Therefore, there is a pressing need to systematize knowledge on the nature of children's socio-psychological trauma due to parental loss or divorce, and to identify effective forms and strategies of intervention.

Children experiencing parental loss often go through stages similar to the mourning process: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Divorce, though not necessarily associated with death, can trigger a similar psychological response due to the perceived loss of family unity. Studies show that children aged 6 to 12 are especially vulnerable, as they are old enough to comprehend the permanence of the situation but lack mature coping mechanisms [2, p. 475].

Behavioral manifestations may include regressive behaviors (e.g., bedwetting, tantrums), increased clinginess, attention-seeking, or withdrawal from peers. Adolescents may express their distress through rebellion, identity confusion, or risk-taking behaviors. These emotional responses are compounded when the divorce is accompanied by high interparental conflict or lack of clear communication.

Socio-psychological support refers to a system of measures aimed at maintaining or restoring a child's emotional balance, resilience, and sense of security. It includes both individual and systemic approaches involving family, school, peers, and professional support services.

Key components of socio-psychological support for children facing parental loss or divorce include several interrelated interventions aimed at promoting emotional stability and resilience. Crisis intervention and counseling provide immediate psychological assistance to address acute emotional responses, helping children process shock, grief, or confusion. Stabilization of routine and environment is essential to reduce anxiety, as consistent daily activities create a sense of safety and predictability. Equally important is the facilitation of emotional expression through therapeutic modalities such as play therapy, art therapy, or narrative techniques, allowing children to process feelings they may struggle to verbalize. Psychoeducation for both the child and caregivers supports understanding of emotional reactions and introduces healthy coping mechanisms. Finally, family therapy serves to restore trust, improve communication, and strengthen emotional bonds within the reorganized family system, fostering a supportive and secure environment for the child's development [3, p. 2].

Effective support models are based on an integrative, child-centered approach. For instance, the *Child-Centered Play Therapy (CCPT)* model allows

children to express complex emotions through symbolic play under the guidance of a trained therapist. The *Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)* framework has shown significant efficacy in reducing PTSD symptoms of children who experienced family trauma.

School-based interventions also play a crucial role, particularly when home environments are unstable. Social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, group counseling sessions, and teacher involvement can provide continuity of care. The *Circle of Security* model emphasizes building secure attachment relationships even after family disruption, focusing on emotional availability and responsiveness of caregivers [2, p. 478].

Despite the availability of effective methodologies, several significant barriers hinder the implementation of socio-psychological support for children experiencing parental loss or divorce. Cultural stigma surrounding mental health services or family disruption often discourages families from seeking help, particularly in more traditional or conservative communities. In rural or low-resource areas, the shortage of trained mental health professionals limits access to quality support. Furthermore, a lack of coordination between schools, families, and mental health institutions can lead to fragmented or inconsistent care, reducing the overall effectiveness of interventions. Legal constraints related to custody or visitation rights may also disrupt the child's emotional stability, especially when parental conflict or restricted contact exacerbates feelings of insecurity and loss [4, p. 47].

These challenges highlight the need for systemic reforms and increased community awareness to ensure comprehensive and accessible support for all affected children.

The experience of parental loss or divorce is a profound psychological challenge that, without timely support, can negatively affect a child's developmental trajectory. Socio-psychological support plays a crucial preventive and rehabilitative role by creating safe spaces for emotional processing, building resilience, and restoring a sense of continuity and belonging [1, p. 130].

The findings emphasize the necessity of adopting an integrated, multi-level model of intervention that involves families, schools, mental health professionals, and community organizations. Psychological resilience is not an innate trait but can be fostered through structured support.

Future directions for research and practice include developing scalable intervention programs for schools and community centers, implementing digital tools for remote psychological support (particularly in conflict zones or remote

areas), conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of early interventions, and designing culturally sensitive practices tailored to specific regional or ethnic contexts.

In conclusion, building effective systems of socio-psychological support for children in situations of parental loss or divorce is not only a task of mental health professionals, but also a responsibility of educational institutions, policymakers, and the broader society.

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PROFILAKTYKA UZALEŻNIEŃ WŚRÓD DZIECI I MŁODZIEŻY

Autorka porusza aktualny i niepokojący problem uzależnień wśród dzieci i młodzieży. Autorka analizuje przyczyny sięgania po substancje psychoaktywne, takie jak chęć ucieczki od stresu, potrzeba akceptacji społecznej czy poszukiwanie silnych doznań. Podkreśla również znaczenie profilaktyki, która powinna być prowadzona na trzech poziomach: pierwotnym, wtórnym i trzeciorzędowym. Wskazuje na potrzebę zaangażowania lokalnych społeczności i budowania środowiska wspierającego rozwój młodych ludzi. Artykuł akcentuje rolę szkoły,