

Healing Invisible Wounds: Ukraine Mental Health Relief

Project Report - November 2025

Oksana's Journey from Darkness to Light

Oksana sat in silence for the first three sessions at our Wound Healing Centre. The 42-year-old teacher from Mariupol had fled her destroyed city with only her teenage daughter. Her husband had stayed behind to defend their hometown and never returned.

She describes those first months: "I couldn't sleep. Every loud noise sent my heart racing. I felt like I was drowning in guilt - guilt for leaving, guilt for surviving, guilt for not being able to help my daughter who was also struggling."

Today, six months later, Oksana is transformed. Through individual counseling and group therapy sessions at the MUTIMA Psychological Rehabilitation Center, she has learned to manage her PTSD symptoms. She has found community with other displaced women, and most importantly, she has started teaching again - this time at a local school in Lviv, giving purpose back to her life.

"The psychologists here saved my life," she shares with tears in her eyes. "They helped me understand that healing is not about forgetting - it's about learning to live again despite everything we have lost."

Oksana is one of more than 420 people we have helped through this project.

Your Impact: Healing One Heart at a Time

Thanks to your generous support through the Ukraine Mental Health Relief Fund, we have achieved significant results since October 2023:

- **613 individual counseling sessions** provided to trauma survivors
- **80 group therapy sessions** offering peer support and collective healing
- **About 320 people** participated in group therapy sessions
- **About 100 people** received individualized psychological support
- **17 professional psychologists, psychotherapists, and art therapists** trained and deployed
- **Confidential spaces established** in parish communities for safe, dignified care

The Mental Health Crisis in Ukraine

Three years into the full-scale Russian invasion, Ukraine faces an unprecedented mental health crisis. The numbers tell a devastating story:

- **68% of Ukrainians** report decline in overall health since the invasion
- **46% specifically cite mental health concerns** as their primary health issue
- **9.6 million Ukrainians** are estimated to need professional mental health support
- **80% of citizens** live under chronic stress and anxiety
- **3.7 million people** remain internally displaced within Ukraine
- **6.3 million refugees** are scattered across Europe

Mental health has become the most prevalent health impact of the war, surpassing even physical injuries and chronic diseases. PTSD rates are alarmingly high: over 50% of

internally displaced persons meet diagnostic criteria for PTSD, while 62% of refugees abroad show symptoms of the disorder.

The Most Vulnerable

Children and adolescents: Nearly 1.7 million school-aged children remain displaced. Studies show that 30% experience severe psychological distress. Many have witnessed bombings, lost caregivers, or had their education interrupted. The average PTSD prevalence among war-affected youth is 29%, with ongoing conflict areas showing rates of 32%.

Veterans: By mid-2024, an estimated 100,000 amputations had been performed due to the war. Veterans face not only physical trauma but profound psychological wounds. Many struggle with reintegration into civilian life, experiencing PTSD, depression, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation.

Displaced families: One-third of internally displaced persons show symptoms of PTSD, 22% have depression, and 18% have anxiety. Refugees abroad face even higher rates. The inability to plan for the future, combined with loss of homes and livelihoods, creates persistent psychological distress.

Women and survivors of violence: Women constitute 79% of refugees and face heightened vulnerability to gender-based violence, trafficking, and exploitation during displacement.

Our Response: The Psychological Rehabilitation Project

Launched in October 2023 by the Patriarchal Foundation Mudra Sprava in partnership with the Madrid City Council, our project provides holistic psychological support through Wound Healing Centres located in parish communities across Ukraine.

Our comprehensive approach includes:

- **Individual psychological counseling:** One-on-one sessions in confidential, safe spaces where trauma survivors receive personalized support
- **Group therapy:** Facilitated sessions where people with shared experiences find community, reduce isolation, and heal together
- **Art therapy and music therapy:** Creative modalities that help people express trauma when words fail
- **Psychoeducation:** Teaching self-care techniques and trauma awareness to empower people in their own recovery
- **Family support:** Specialized services for military families, helping them navigate the unique challenges of deployment, injury, and loss

Andriy's Story: A Veteran Finds Peace

Andriy, a 35-year-old former soldier, lost his leg to a landmine near Bakhmut. When he arrived at our center, he was drowning in alcohol and couldn't look his young son in the eye. The nightmares were constant. He felt like a burden to his wife.

Through our specialized veteran support program, Andriy worked with a psychologist who was also a war veteran. This peer understanding made all the difference. Slowly, session by session, Andriy learned to manage his PTSD symptoms, reconnect with his family, and find new purpose.

He recently started a small business repairing computers. His psychologist shares: "Andriy's transformation shows what is possible when veterans receive proper mental health support. He is not just surviving now - he is building a new life."

Challenges We Face

Despite our progress, the needs far exceed our capacity. The Ukrainian mental health system, already strained before 2022, has been pushed to its breaking point:

- **Severe workforce shortages:** Over 21% of mental health workers have been displaced, and staff numbers continue to decline
- **Overwhelming demand:** Psychiatric hospitalizations have increased to 552 per month in 2024, up from 433 before the war
- **Stigma:** Over 80% of Ukrainians have never consulted a mental health professional, despite clear need
- **Access barriers:** Cost, availability, and long waitlists prevent many from getting help
- **Damaged infrastructure:** Over 2,100 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed

Only 10% of internally displaced people with mental disorders have received professional help. The gap between need and available services is staggering.

How Your Continued Support Helps

Every donation to the Ukraine Mental Health Relief Fund directly supports:

- **Salaries for psychologists and therapists** working in conflict-affected areas
- **Equipment and supplies** for counseling spaces and therapy sessions
- **Training programs** to expand the pool of qualified mental health professionals
- **Community outreach** to reduce stigma and connect people with services
- **Specialized programs** for veterans, children, and displaced families

Young Sofia's Smile Returns

Eight-year-old Sofia stopped speaking after her school was bombed. Her mother, Iryna, tried everything. Teachers were worried. Doctors found nothing physically wrong.

At our center, Sofia met Halyna, an art therapist. Through drawing and painting, Sofia slowly began to express what she could not say with words. Week by week, color returned to her pictures. And then, after two months, words began to return too.

Iryna says with joy: "I heard my daughter laugh again. That sound is worth everything. Thank you for giving us our Sofia back."

Why Mental Health Matters for Ukraine's Future

Mental health is not a luxury - it is the foundation for rebuilding Ukraine.

Without addressing the psychological wounds of war, Ukraine cannot recover. Untreated trauma perpetuates cycles of violence, prevents economic productivity, disrupts families, and undermines social cohesion. Children who do not receive help today will carry these wounds into adulthood, affecting generations to come.

But healing is possible. We see it every day in our centers. Like Oksana, who teaches again. Like Andriy, who built a business. Like Sofia, who found her voice. Your support makes these transformations possible.

The people of Ukraine have shown extraordinary resilience. They have endured unimaginable suffering - missile strikes, displacement, loss of loved ones, destruction of homes. They have not given up. They deserve the support they need to heal.

Mental health is hope. Mental health is dignity. Mental health is the path to peace.

Thank you for standing with Ukraine. Thank you for healing invisible wounds. Thank you for being part of the hope that keeps Ukraine going.

#StandWithUkraine #MentalHealthMatters

With gratitude and solidarity,
The Psychological Rehabilitation Team

Patriarchal Foundation Mudra Sprava

www.mudrasprava.fund

Project: Children and Adults Psychological Rehabilitation

Partner: Madrid City Council (Spain)