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SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INFLUENCE OF EXTREME ENVIRONMENTS ON THE ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF MILITARIES IN THE CONDITIONS OF WAR IN UKRAINE

***Abstract.** The healthiest contingent of young men in our country is called up for active military service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. This entails serving not only in normal but also in extreme conditions of war in Ukraine. Modern understanding of psychological and socio-psychological consequences of extreme conditions on military personnel is traditionally examined in two main ways: firstly, from the perspective of their impact on combat effectiveness and, secondly, from the perspective of maintaining soldiers' mental health.*

Each military man reacts to the impact of extreme factors depending on their constitutional characteristics, varying susceptibility to external influences, including energy-informational ones, ethnicity, time spent in extreme zones and the environmental and climatic characteristics of their places of permanent residence. Psychological and psychophysical readiness play a major role in the adaptation process of military men for their service in the Army. Therefore, for the effective completion of assigned tasks in stressful conditions the development of a soldier's personality is no less important than the targeted development of technical skills and physical qualities. Psychophysical readiness is determined by the level of the development of necessary general mental and specific physical qualities: strength, speed, agility and endurance, motor coordination, resistance to stress, the ability to withstand the effects of extreme factors, as well as the development of psychomotor abilities that allow for fine-tuning the quantity and quality of motor actions.

In some cases, a stressful event for militaries in the conditions of war in Ukraine can also have psychotraumatic consequences, and this is referred to as a traumatic event. The response to a traumatic event can be divided into several phases: primary emotional reaction; denial phase, which manifests itself in emotional suppression and the desire to avoid memories of the traumatic event; alternation between denial and intrusion. Intrusion manifests itself in "breakthrough" memories of the traumatic event, dreams about the event, and a heightened level of reactivity to

anything that reminds one of it; a phase of further intellectual and emotional processing of the traumatic experience of militaries in the conditions of war in Ukraine.

The severity of a traumatic event, which determines the greening of military consciousness in war situations in Ukraine, depends on: the presence or absence of a threat to life; the severity of losses; the suddenness of the military event; the degree of isolation from others at the time of the military event; the degree of environmental influence, that functionally reserves of ecological consciousness of militaries in the conditions of war; the presence or absence of protection the person of militaries from a possible recurrence of the traumatic event; the presence or absence of moral conflicts associated with the traumatic event and their nature; the passive or active role of the individual in the stressful situation; the nature of the immediate impact of the event.

Keywords: *ecological consciousness, extreme environments, traumatic event, stressful situations, military event, the conditions of war in Ukraine, ecological norms of militaries' activity.*

Problem's statement. The healthiest contingent of young men in our country is called up for active military service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. This entails serving not only in normal but also in extreme conditions of war in Ukraine. Modern understanding of psychological and socio-psychological consequences of extreme conditions on military personnel is traditionally examined in two main ways: firstly, from the perspective of their impact on combat effectiveness and, secondly, from the perspective of maintaining soldiers' mental health.

Each military man reacts to the impact of extreme factors depending on their constitutional characteristics, varying susceptibility to external influences, including energy-informational ones, ethnicity, time spent in extreme zones and the environmental and climatic characteristics of their places of permanent residence. Psychological and psychophysical readiness play a major role in the adaptation process of military men for their service in the Army. Therefore, for the effective completion of assigned tasks in stressful conditions the development of a soldier's personality is no less important than the targeted development of technical skills and physical qualities. Psychophysical readiness is determined by the level of the development of necessary general mental and specific physical qualities: strength, speed, agility and endurance, motor coordination, resistance to stress, the ability to withstand the effects of extreme factors, as well as the development of psychomotor abilities that allow for fine-tuning the quantity and quality of motor actions.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. Despite military psychology's interest to the problem of individual adaptation to normal and extreme military service conditions, a unified theory of military personnel adaptation is currently lacking, leading to ambiguity in the definition and content of the adaptation process. A literature review revealed that increased adaptation in extreme conditions is viewed as the individual's adaptation to life under stress, based on the conception of researchers (Mykhalchuket al., 2025) of general adaptation syndrome and the conception of scientists (Mykhalchuket al., 2023) of extreme conditions of individual life. Adaptation is understood as the process of developing individual's mental reactions and a system of relationships that are adequate to the demands placed on the individual by the environment in general social ecological space (Drozd et al., 2025).

Based on a Systemic Approach to studying the body's interaction with the external environment (Heino, Ellison & Gibbs, 2010), the researches of psychologists suggest that adaptation is a universal human ability, characterized by external (motor) and internal (personality-psychological) manifestations that interact structurally and functionally to form a unified adaptive capacity (Ishkhanyan, Boye & Mogensen, 2019). Different mental states (including extreme ones) result in the development of different psychomotor subsystems, which are a consequence of responses to external stimuli (Arbuthnott & Frank, 2000). Psychomotor skills enable the management of mental processes under stressful task performance conditions (Pimperton & Nation, 2010). Improving motor regulation of activity fosters higher-level control, which ensures adequate self-regulation in interpersonal relationships and activities. This points us to the possibility of

targeted development of qualitative and quantitative indicators of adaptive processes (Ramirez & Wang, 2008).

The relevance of this research stems from the current lack of a unified, scientifically sound conception for the psychological adaptation of military personnel to extreme service conditions. This conception could significantly improve the success rate of military personnel (effectively completing combat missions) and maintain the health of the country's most active male population (Rains & Scott, 2007). The research of objective stems from the need to develop environmental awareness among military personnel in extreme service conditions and the lack of a unified concept for adaptation. The most effective way to overcome this contradiction is to study and synthesize the characteristics of military personnel's psychological adaptation to extreme military conditions in the Ukrainian Army.

So, **the purpose** of our research is to investigate socio-psychological characteristics of the influence of extreme environments on the ecological consciousness of military personnel in the conditions of war in Ukraine.

The results of the research and their discussion. Mental state of militaries is understood by us as a holistic characteristics of mental activity during a specific period of war events. Currently, there are several approaches to classifying mental states. Researchers (Nowak, Watt & Walther, 2009) extend the classification adopted for mental processes (cognitive, emotional and volitional types) to mental states. In another case, characterological traits were used: composure versus absent-mindedness; decisiveness versus indecisiveness; cheerfulness versus sadness, etc. There are classifications based on state characteristics: personal versus situational; deeper versus superficial; prolonged versus short-term; more conscious versus less conscious, etc. (Гончарук & Онуфрієва, 2018).

For *practical purposes*, in terms of predicting and maintaining military-professional performance, it is also advisable to classify mental states by such parameters, as:

- states favourable to performance and vital functions and, conversely, negative states;
- states characterized by stability and, conversely, by instability and lability;
- states caused primarily by emotional factors or, conversely, by physical influences of the environment and activity.

Of course, all of these parameters are interconnected to varying degrees and depend on various mental processes, mental properties and the level of functional state, which must be taken into account when examining the problems of their regulation (Cattell, 1988). Negative mental states are leading to a decrease in military-professional performance, which are often caused by extreme working and living conditions. Extreme conditions are those ones that lie outside the relative optimum in which a person feels comfortable and functions normally. Optimal living and professional conditions do not require particular stress and allow for the rapid restoration of the body's functional reserves after stressful periods. This is what humans have adapted to during the course of evolution (Key-DeLyria, Bodner & Altmann, 2019).

Extreme situations include those characterized by:

1. Various emotional impacts associated with danger, difficulty, novelty, the high level of responsibility of the task being performed, limited time for decision-making, etc.
2. Situations accompanied by the risk of mass casualties, a feeling of helplessness and an immediate threat to life.
3. Excessive stress on mental and psychomotor processes.
4. Excessive stress on speech functions, especially when information is deficient.
5. Excessive physical exertion, overexertion.
6. Exposure to significant accelerations and vestibular stress.
7. A state of markedly reduced motor activity (hypokinesia and hypodynamia).
8. Sudden changes in barometric pressure.

9. The effects of severe hyperventilation, such as increased deep breathing for more than 2,5-3 minutes, such as during intense emotional stress, resulting in a critical decrease in alveolar carbon dioxide levels and, conversely, a significant increase in blood carbon dioxide levels (hypercapnia).

10. Hypoxia, which is a significant decrease in oxygen levels in body tissues.
11. The presence of various harmful elements in inhaled air.
12. The adverse effects of vibration, noise and radio frequencies.
13. The adverse effects of various climatic and microclimatic factors (heat, cold, humidity).
14. Hunger and thirst.
15. Sensory deprivation and information isolation.
16. Accumulated mental stress, anxiety.
17. Experiencing the misfortune of loved people, their death.

Extreme living and working conditions can also include various pathological conditions of the body, severely adverse functional and mental states resulting from extreme external influences or profound emotional experiences. Extreme conditions include both increases and decreases in a given factor relative to the optimum: death can be caused by heat or cold, negative reactions can arise from physical overexertion, physical inactivity (insufficient physical activity). Extreme conditions most often manifest themselves in demanding professional activities, but can also arise in everyday life. Family quarrels, poverty, cramped living conditions, misfortunes involving children or parents and rudeness from superiors – all of these can cause extreme situations.

Depending on the intensity and duration of exposure to various external and internal environmental factors, a unique classification of working and living conditions of militaries can be created, identifying optimal, paraextreme (from the Latin “para” – it is near), extreme, paraterminal and terminal (from the Latin “terminus” – it is the end) conditions (Fig. 1).

Paraextreme (near-extreme) conditions are characterized by insignificant mobilization of functional reserves, leading to the emergence of so-called operational stress. Unlike tension, which is almost always a negative state, operational stress under certain conditions serves as the most positive factor, ensuring increased performance of the person’s activity.

Under extreme conditions, performance of initially declines, with a reduction in individual indicators of functional reserves eventually giving a unique way to general increase and, ultimately, a redistribution. The psychological state of a person under these conditions is characterized by discomfort and intense tension, escalating into overexertion. At the same time, the pronounced mobilization of functional resources that occurs under extreme conditions can facilitate the successful resolution of existing problems. Under paraterminal conditions, the dynamics of psychological and physiological indicators of ecological consciousness of militaries in the conditions of war are characterized by the cessation of the redistribution of functional reserves and the onset of a marked overall decline. The body’s reserves are depleted, general asthenia (such as exhaustion) sets in, a pronounced astheno-depressive state of militaries in the conditions of war develops, and, if exposure to extreme factors (stress) continues, a transition to terminal conditions is much more possible. The transition to terminal working and living conditions with further exposure to extreme factors inevitably leads to a fatal outcome of ecological consciousness of militaries in the conditions of war (we’d like to remember, that “terminus” is translated as “the end”).

It should be noted that this classification of living and working conditions is relative for ecological consciousness of militaries in the conditions of war. Much depends on the magnitude and duration of extreme exposure, as well as the individual’s adaptability to militaries. For example, 1-kilometer cross-country run in 4,5-5,0 minutes is a light warm-up for a trained athlete and can be classified as para-extreme conditions of the person’s activity. However, for an obese individual with no previous physical activity, especially after a sore throat, such a workout would be extreme and could be classified as para-terminal or even terminal, potentially fatal one. Therefore, unit of

commanders must carefully consider the functional status and fitness level of their subordinates in the conditions of war in Ukraine.

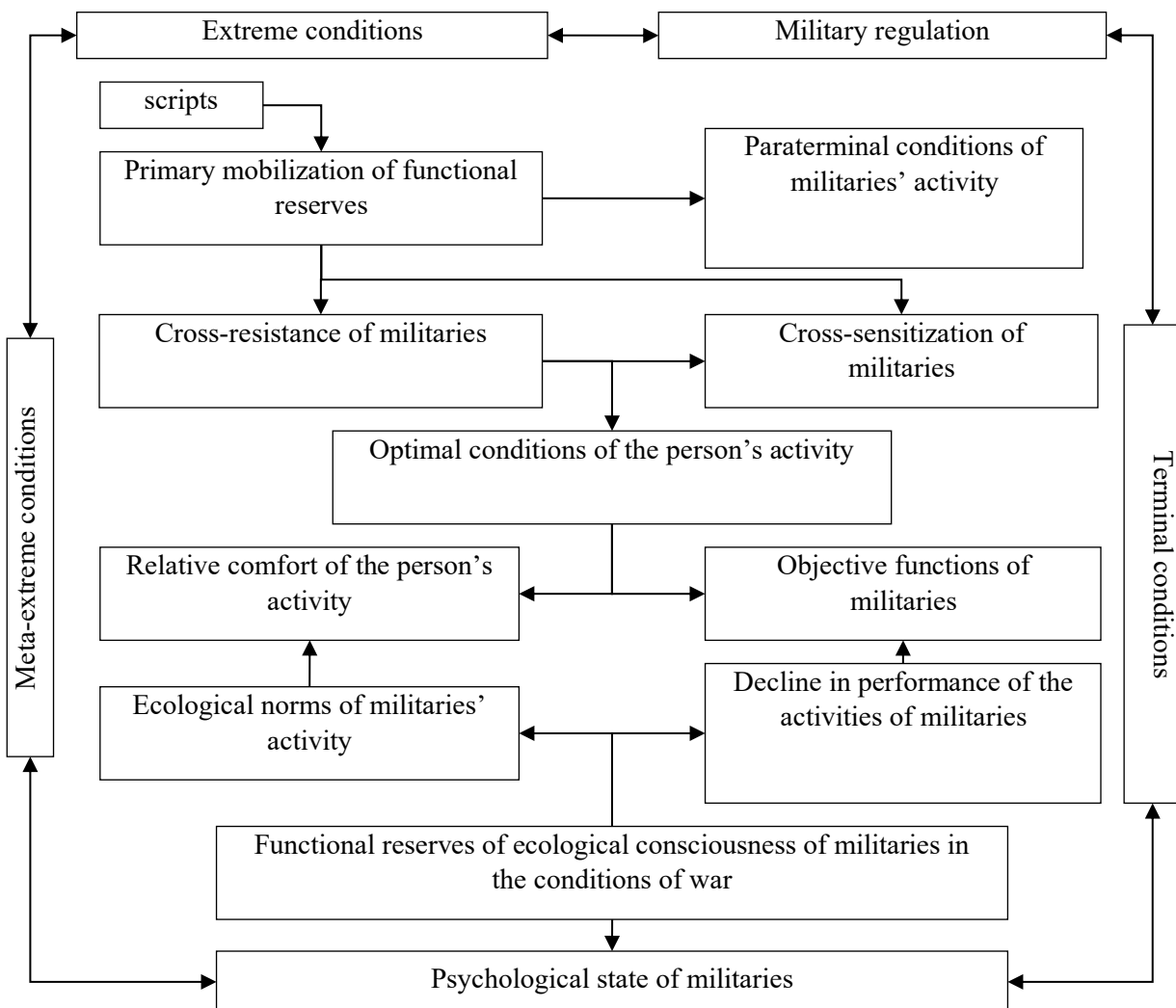


Fig. 1. Classification of living conditions

At the same time, it should be noted that military personnel are often called upon to participate in emergency response operations after emergencies and disasters. This type of military activity is undoubtedly extreme one. It should be noted that military professional activities can rightfully be classified as extreme ones, as military personnel often perform their duties in extreme conditions. Let's consider the dynamics of the person's mental state in extreme conditions of war in Ukraine and some characteristics of extreme military activity.

Let us show psychological characteristics of human behavior in extreme conditions. There are many theoretical approaches to understanding the psychophysiological mechanisms of the onset and course of stress reactions of militaries in the conditions of war in Ukraine. The most objective it is the viewpoint of the researchers (Lawson & Leck, 2006; Schleicher & McConnell, 2005), according to whom any demand placed on the human body evokes a specific response, which we call stress. As it has been experimentally established, regardless of the type of changes in the body caused by stressful situations, they require the body to restructure itself in order to adapt to new conditions. The body, as a complex, is highly organized system, responds to various intense

influences with adaptive and protective reactions, the totality of which we call a general adaptation syndrome. This syndrome is developed through three phases.

The first phase is "the alarm response". The body of the person changes its internal characteristics, the endocrine glands change, and the adrenaline level in the blood changes. This reaction occurs during the pre-start mobilization process. Generally, this reaction is positive and has the aim to provide the body with sufficient energy at the right moment for an adequate response to the stimulus. However, in some cases, an extended pre-start period reduces the effectiveness of subsequent actions, and in extreme situations, functional disorders, psychosomatic illnesses and neuroses may occur.

The second phase is *the phase of resistance*. The body resists, signs of anxiety disappear, and the level of resistance is much higher than usual. As long as psychological stress does not exceed the useful limit, the person's professional actions become more energetic, active, and responsive will be under the influence of ecological norms of militaries' activity. The attention of militaries improves, thought processes are quick and clear, motivation increases, and tasks of militaries in the conditions of war in Ukraine are completed with emotional state.

The third phase is the phase of exhaustion. Adaptive energy gradually depletes, resistance declines, and the anxiety response reemerges. When stress increases and exceeds the threshold of usefulness, distress ensues, causing a decline in performances functional reserves of ecological consciousness of militaries in the conditions of war. Overexertion occurs, resulting in a weakening of the militaries' activity and their persistence. The person loses faith in themselves and the success of their actions commits unmotivated actions, and may even abandon the task of actualizing ecological norms of militaries' activity. When this threshold is crossed, extreme stress occurs, leading to a breakdown in mental functioning.

Stress is accompanied by the mobilization of all bodily functions and causes changes in the cardiovascular, respiratory, muscular-motor, endocrine and other systems. The individual's behaviour in a stressful situation depends on its significance, as well as on their psychological makeup: we mean their attitude toward activities' difficulties, success and failure, their level of self-confidence, their personality orientation and the balance between their aspirations and capabilities.

We focused on analyzing the external stressor, substantiated the proposition that the ability to cope with stress was, in the most cases, more important than the nature, magnitude and frequency of stress (Rezaei & Mousanezhad Jeddi, 2020). This proposition formed the basis of transactional cognitive theory of stress and coping behavior (Stephens & Rains, 2011). Theoretical and experimental research has shown that each person uses their own strategies (coping strategies) to cope with stress, based on their personal experience and psychological resources. This type of personal resource typically includes cognitive development, Self-concept and Self-control, as well as psychological personality traits that promote stress resilience of militaries in the conditions of war in Ukraine.

Emphasizing the psychological aspect of stress of militaries in the conditions of war in Ukraine, it should be noted that a person reacts not only to real danger but also to threats and danger symbols associated with past experiences. Physiological changes occurring in the human body in response to stressful events are, in fact, merely a consequence of the emotional experiences they have already evoked: without emotional experiences, physiological changes do not occur, even if stress results in physiological trauma and functional reserves of ecological consciousness of militaries in the conditions of war. Stress, therefore, arises primarily in response to a threat that acts remotely on a person, evoking a particular emotional response to it and thereby preparing the entire body for possible physical consequences of militaries in the conditions of war in Ukraine. Consequently, stress for a person is the result of the perception of such a threat, the emotional experience of which affects their ability to function effectively of ecological norms of militaries' activity.

Thus, the term “stressful” event can encompass all external influences on a person of military in the conditions of war in Ukraine that, despite their enormous diversity, produce the same effect as a complex of negative emotions that reduces an individual’s functional capabilities or weakens the body’s overall resistance. Any stressful event, which reserves of ecological consciousness of military in the conditions of war, can be divided into three interrelated components: a distant threat; the individual’s perception and emotional experience of this threat; the physiological and somatic consequences of these experiences.

In some cases, a stressful event for military in the conditions of war in Ukraine can also have psychotraumatic consequences, and this is referred to as a traumatic event. The response to a traumatic event can be divided into several phases: primary emotional reaction; denial phase, which manifests itself in emotional suppression and the desire to avoid memories of the traumatic event; alternation between denial and intrusion. Intrusion manifests itself in “breakthrough” memories of the traumatic event, dreams about the event, and a heightened level of reactivity to anything that reminds one of it; a phase of further intellectual and emotional processing of the traumatic experience of military in the conditions of war in Ukraine.

The duration of the response to a stressful event depends on the significance of the information associated with it for the individual according to ecological norms of military’s activity. In a favourable course, this process lasts from several weeks to several months after the event and culminates with the cessation of the traumatic impact. However, often the tension resulting from the stressor persists much longer. Many military either fail to recognize the symptoms of stress or do not know how to relieve them. As a result, the tension becomes integrated into the personality system of military in the conditions of war in Ukraine and does not make itself felt until the system becomes imbalanced.

Conclusions and perspectives of further researches. The severity of a traumatic event, which determines the greening of military consciousness in war situations in Ukraine, depends on: the presence or absence of a threat to life; the severity of losses; the suddenness of the military event; the degree of isolation from others at the time of the military event; the degree of environmental influence, that functionally reserves of ecological consciousness of military in the conditions of war; the presence or absence of protection the person of military from a possible recurrence of the traumatic event; the presence or absence of moral conflicts associated with the traumatic event and their nature; the passive or active role of the individual in the stressful situation; the nature of the immediate impact of the event.

A person, who remains in a state of stress in the conditions of war in Ukraine or periodically returns to this state as long as they continue to process information about a stressful (psycho-traumatic) event. The main symptoms of stress of military in the conditions of war in Ukraine are manifesting at the psychological level, which includes the following: irritability in communication in military conditions of war in Ukraine; difficulty performing daily tasks and familiar types of military activities that the individual previously coped with quite successful preconditions of functional reserves of ecological consciousness of military in the conditions of war; loss of interest in life; constant or occasional fear of getting sick; constant expectation of failure; feelings of inferiority or even self-hatred; difficulty making decisions; loss of interest in other people; a constant feeling of barely suppressed anger; a feeling of hostility from others; loss of a sense of humor and the ability to laugh; indifference (to work, household chores, appearance, others); fear for the future; fear of one’s own incompetence in all responsible matters; a feeling that no one can be trusted; decreased ability to concentrate; inability to complete one task without abandoning it and starting another one; intense fear of open or enclosed spaces, or fear of solitude of ecological norms of military’s activity.

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**СОЦІАЛЬНО-ПСИХОЛОГІЧНА ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА ВПЛИВУ
ЕКСТРЕМАЛЬНОГО СЕРЕДОВИЩА НА ЕКОЛОГІЧНУ СВІДОМІСТЬ
ВІЙСЬКОВОСЛУЖБОВЦІВ В УМОВАХ ВІЙНИ В УКРАЇНІ**

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Анотація. У статті показано, найбільш здоровий контингент юнаків нашої країни призивається на реальну військову службу до Збройних Сил України. Це передбачає службу не лише в звичайних, а й в екстремальних умовах війни в Україні. Сучасне розуміння психологічних та соціально-психологічних наслідків екстремальних умов для військовослужбовців, їх екологічної свідомості традиційно розглядається у двох основних напрямках: по-перше, з точки зору впливу екологічної свідомості на боєдатність військовослужбовців, та, по-друге, з точки зору збереження психічного здоров'я солдатів.

Кожен військовослужбовець реагує на вплив екстремальних факторів залежно від своїх конституційних особливостей, різної сприйнятливості щодо зовнішніх екологічних впливів, зокрема енергоінформаційних, етнічної приналежності, часу перебування в екстремальних зонах та еколого-кліматичних особливостей місць постійного проживання та перебування на війні. Психологічна та психофізична готовність відіграють важливу роль у процесі адаптації військовослужбовців до служби в армії. Тому для ефективного виконання поставлених завдань у стресових умовах розвиток особистості солдата є не менш важливим чинником, ніж цілеспрямований розвиток технічних навичок та фізичних якостей військовослужбовців. Психофізична готовність до здійснення військових дій визначається високим рівнем розвитку необхідних загальнопсихічних та специфічних фізичних якостей: сили, швидкості, спритності та витривалості, координації рухів, стійкості до стресу, здатності протистояти впливу екстремальних факторів, а також розвитком психомоторних здібностей, що дозволяють доволі точно налаштувати кількість та якість рухових дій військовослужбовців в умовах війни в Україні.

У деяких випадках стресова подія для військовослужбовців в умовах війни в Україні може мати психотравматичні наслідки, і вона має назву травматичної події, яка також зумовлює рівень екологічної свідомості особистості. Реакцію на травматичну подію можна розділити на кілька фаз: первинна емоційна реакція; фаза заперечення, яка виявляється в емоційному пригніченні та бажанні уникнути спогадів щодо травматичної події; чергування заперечення та нав'язування. Нав'язування виявляється у «прориві» спогадів щодо даної травматичної події, сновидіннях про подію та підвищеному рівневі реактивності на все, що нагадує про цю подію; фаза подальшої інтелектуальної та емоційної обробки травматичного досвіду військовослужбовців в умовах війни в Україні.

Тяжкість травматичної події, яка визначає екологізацію військової свідомості у воєнних ситуаціях в Україні, залежить від: наявності або відсутності загрози життю; тяжкості втрат; раптовості військової події; ступеню ізоляції від оточуючих на момент військової події; ступеню впливу навколишнього середовища, що функціонально зберігає екологічну свідомість військовослужбовців в умовах війни; наявності або відсутності захисту особи військовослужбовця від можливого повторення травматичної події; наявності або відсутності моральних конфліктів, пов'язаних з травматичною подією, та їх характеру; пасивної чи активної ролі особистості у стресовій ситуації; характеру безпосереднього впливу події на екологічну свідомість військовослужбовців.

Ключові слова: екологічна свідомість, екстремальне середовище, травматична подія, стресові ситуації, військова подія, умови війни в Україні, екологічні норми діяльності військовослужбовців.

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