

**ORGANIZING A PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS IN
EXTREME AND EMERGENCY CONDITIONS**

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Annotation: This article examines the importance of providing psychological assistance to various segments of the population during extreme situations and analyzes the existing challenges in this field. It discusses approaches and psychological service methods tailored to the needs of children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and emergency service personnel. Based on the findings, practical recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of psychological assistance in extreme conditions.

Keywords: extreme situations, psychological assistance, stress, trauma, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, emergency services.

Abstract. The present article analyzes the significance of psychological support for different population groups in extreme and emergency situations and highlights key problems related to its implementation. The study discusses approaches and psychological service methods adapted to the specific needs of children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and emergency workers. Based on the analysis, recommendations are provided to improve the effectiveness of psychological assistance in extreme conditions.

Extreme situations typically arise from unexpected natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, wildfires), technological accidents (major industrial failures, explosions), or social instability (wars, civil unrest), all of which pose serious threats to human life. These situations cause severe psychological impacts on individuals, including intense stress, fear, and traumatic experiences.

For example, the 2010 Haiti earthquake resulted in more than 3 million victims, and over 20% of them required long-term psychological support. Therefore, providing psychological assistance in such conditions remains relevant and crucial for all segments of society.

Following natural disasters, the psychological state of children may require interventions such as play therapy, art therapy, and storytelling techniques, depending on the level of trauma. For the elderly, emotional support, strengthening the sense of safety, and enhancing social integration are of great importance.

The effectiveness of psychological assistance largely depends on the prompt organization of support services and the customization of interventions based on individual needs. Hotlines, online psychological counseling, and rapid deployment of resources (for example, using heat maps for resource distribution) play a key role. Moreover, it is essential to develop long-term support strategies.

Below is a table summarizing major problems and relevant statistical data on psychological assistance needs among different social groups in extreme situations:

Group	Main Problem	Statistical Data	Effective Methods and Solutions
Children and adolescents	Difficulty processing traumatic experiences; inability to express emotions	Psychological trauma prevalence among children of the Syrian conflict: 60% (UNICEF, 2018)	Play therapy, art therapy, storytelling techniques
Elderly	Loneliness, loss of security, increased anxiety and depression	During the COVID-19 pandemic, 45% of elderly individuals showed symptoms of depression (WHO, 2021)	Group therapy, continuous communication, social support
Persons with disabilities	Evacuation difficulties, lack of necessary conditions	During the Fukushima nuclear disaster (2011), evacuation opportunities for persons with disabilities were significantly limited	Assistive technologies, specialized emergency services
Emergency workers	Chronic stress and PTSD	After the 9/11 attacks, 40% of firefighters suffered from PTSD (NIMH, 2002)	Relaxation exercises, stress-management training, psychological counseling

Cultural norms and local traditions must be considered when organizing psychological assistance in extreme situations. In some communities, integrating psychological support with traditional healing practices or involving community leaders and religious figures may significantly increase the effectiveness of interventions. Additionally, emergency assistance should not be limited to psychological counseling but should include socio-economic support as well.

Developing programs tailored for vulnerable populations requires the involvement of various specialists. Psychologists, physicians, social workers, and emergency management specialists must work collaboratively to ensure an integrated approach. For example, creating play centers for children, social support networks for the elderly, and self-regulation and stress-reduction sessions for women can be highly effective.

Another essential factor is implementing systems to evaluate and regularly update psychological service mechanisms. Continuous monitoring, research, analysis of outcomes, and the identification of best practices contribute to improving future strategies. Adapting international experience to local contexts can further enhance the quality of emergency psychological services.

The success of psychological assistance in extreme conditions is based on several key principles. First, **timeliness** is critical. Delayed assistance can worsen stress levels and intensify trauma. Rapid intervention minimizes long-term psychological consequences. Second, **flexibility** is essential, requiring intervention methods tailored to different population groups. Third, effective cooperation among psychologists, medical specialists, social workers, and emergency service agencies ensures comprehensive and coordinated support.

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