

# Professional Support for Families in Difficult Life Situations

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Relevance of the problem stated in the article is determined by the presence of a significant number of families in difficult life situations who need in professional support and socio-psychological assistance. The article aims to substantiate the effectiveness of the structural-functional model of professional supporting for families in difficult life situations. This kind of families' support is analyzed as a form of a complex form of social assistance. The leading methods are analyses of scientific works and practice, empirical and experimental data, method of involved observation, modeling and experimental method. The experimental method aimed to identify the problems of families and to test the conditions of their effective professional support. The article presents the complex program of the families' support, which includes diagnostic, projective, correctional, rehabilitative, recovery and consulting parts. This program is aimed both at eliminating factor of social risk, preventing the crisis situations in families and children's environment, achievement of high level of specialists' professional competence. The author determines a set of conditions necessary for effective professional support for families in difficult life situations (early diagnosis of the families needing in socio-psychological assistance; complex and systematic character of support; increasing the level of social workers' professional competence; interagency cooperation). The author has developed a model of professional supporting the families in difficult life situations which include subjective, content, technological and effective components. It has been verified experimentally and included 2 directions: 1) support of parents and children; 2) methodical work with specialists of social services.

*Keywords:* family of social risk, family in difficult life situation, social worker, professional support, social rehabilitation, social services.

## INTRODUCTION

### The relevance of the study

Modern political and economical transformations resulted in a number of negative social consequences. They include mass unemployment, poverty, increase

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the number of orphans, the spread of social disease, loss of moral values. This means that an increasing number of people of different age and social group are in a difficult life situation (Zakirova, Masalimova & Nikoghosyan, 2016; Kamalova & Zakirova, 2015; Muravyeva et al., 2014; Zaitseva, 2013). The problem is now becoming so significant that it is discussed at the state level due to the tasks of developing the appropriate social programs.

Disfunctional families, migrant families, poor families, the unemployed, families with disabled children, families with many children get into difficult life situations. These families are characterized by financial, housing, psychological, pedagogical, medical, employment and other problems.

Scientific interest in the issue of families' support that are in a difficult life situation has grown significantly due to a system-wide crisis of society in recent years. This led to the need for more thorough research into the causes, forms, dynamics of family problems and the search for more effective professional preventive, corrective or rehabilitative care.

Families experience an acute need for state support by special social services when they are in a difficult socio-economic and psychological situation. The problem of professional support for families in a difficult life situation is an actual nowadays. At the same time scientific ideas and approaches focused on the modernization of social policy in relation to different groups of families at risk do not fully reflect the importance of special training of specialists for the provision of effective support.

## **The essence of professional support for families in difficult life situation**

In general sense support is understood as assistance to people who have personal or social problems at a certain stage of life. It is considered as a integrative technology system of a person's support.

Unlike correction support does not mean remake but research of potential resources of person or family development, reliance on their own opportunities and create conditions for self-development. The principle of the subject's activity in solving his own problems is one of the main characteristic of support.

Professional support is the integrated and complex system of social and socio-psychological assistance to the families in difficult life situations. It is organized by the social services and is aimed at recovery of educational and social-adaptive functions of the families.

## **Principles of professional support**

As a result of the research work the main principles of professional support have been identified.

1. Systematic support. It means that the professional support is a system of interrelated actions within one program. Besides, the families' problems are studied in the context of intra-family relations and social environment.

2. Complexity of support. The program of support is realized with the usage of different social services in a complex.

3. Optimal use of positive potential of social and cultural environment. The support must reveal potential allies in families' environment and use their creative opportunities in solving the families' problems.

4. Strengthening of the families' own potential for the independent solution of all the problems. The professional support must facilitate self-help, independent solution of personal and social problems. Thus it is necessary to take into account that low level of education and culture is often the main cause of social disadaptation.

5. Priority to prevention in the process of support. It is necessary to eliminate the causes of social risks, to implement prevention of crisis situations in families and children's environment.

6. Respect of family and person autonomy, their right to free choice of further way of development. The removal of children or other members from families is justified only in a case when all the possibilities have been exhausted.

7. Differentiated and individual approaches to people representing different groups of families and children.

8. Targeted assistance. The assistance is provided for specific families and children in accordance with the character of their problems. The situations in these families are professionally diagnosed as difficult and dangerous for them and other people.

9. Sharing of responsibility between customers and specialists for the crisis problem solution and its gradual delegation to customers.

### **Diagnostic stage**

According to diagnostic results and families' observation it has been revealed that all studied families have a definite number of problems. They are not able to solve these problems themselves and they are in need of special support by various specialists of social services.

It was revealed that the level of the dysfunctional family's unity is disjoined. Five of six families have structural and flexible parameters of family's system adaptation. These families feel a high degree of parental anxiety. Herewith the emotional adversity prevails over anxiety that is connected with their performing the educational functions.

At the diagnostic stage it was also revealed that the specialists have professional competence and knowledge for effective performing their professional functions. At the same time it is difficult for them to cope with their responsibilities because of the heavy workload. But they are ready for getting new professional knowledge by training in various seminars, courses, conferences. Self-education was also taken into account by them.

Method of involved observation has revealed the following. Most of the specialists don't use their rights to request and get necessary documents and materials. They not fully cooperate with other departments supporting the families in difficult life situations. The professional burnout syndrome of the specialists who have been working for many years in that institute was marked.

Therefore, today researchers and specialists have to find new ways of more effective models and programs of families' in difficult life situations support. The model developed by the author (Fig.1) lets help the families to find their internal resources and mobilize internal potential of all the family members for way out of difficult life situation. Besides this model contributes to increase the professional competence of the specialists and enrichment of their psychological and pedagogical knowledge and skills.

### **Experimental stage**

At this stage of research work the program of supporting the families in difficult life situation was developed and practically experienced. This complex program includes projective, correctional, rehabilitative, recovery and consulting parts. Forming research work was being carried out during two years. The content of the program implied the systematic use of supporting methods; involvement of the members in social and educational projects; creating a positive atmosphere, a favorable emotional climate. This model is based on experimental program aimed at professional support the families in difficult life situations. The tasks of the program:

- to help the families to find their internal resources and mobilize internal potential of all the family members for way out of difficult life situation;
- to promote the social status of the family and to re-establish its contact with society;
- to create positive models of family relations, valuable attitude to the family, to develop practical skills of fulfilling family roles;
- to help the social workers to master the technologies of supporting the families in difficult life situations;
- to increase the psychological and pedagogical competence of the social workers
- to prevent the professional and emotional burnout syndrome of the specialists.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Methods of study**

Data was collected by the following groups of research methods: analysis, comparison, testing, questionnaires, interview, included observation, modeling method, experimental work. With the usage of modeling method, the model of professional support of families in difficult life situations has been constructed.

### **The experimental base of the study**

The experiment was conducted during 2013-2014 years. The total number of researched families was 6 (each family – individual type of problem). 6 specialists of Public service complex centre were involved in the experiment.

## **RESULTS**

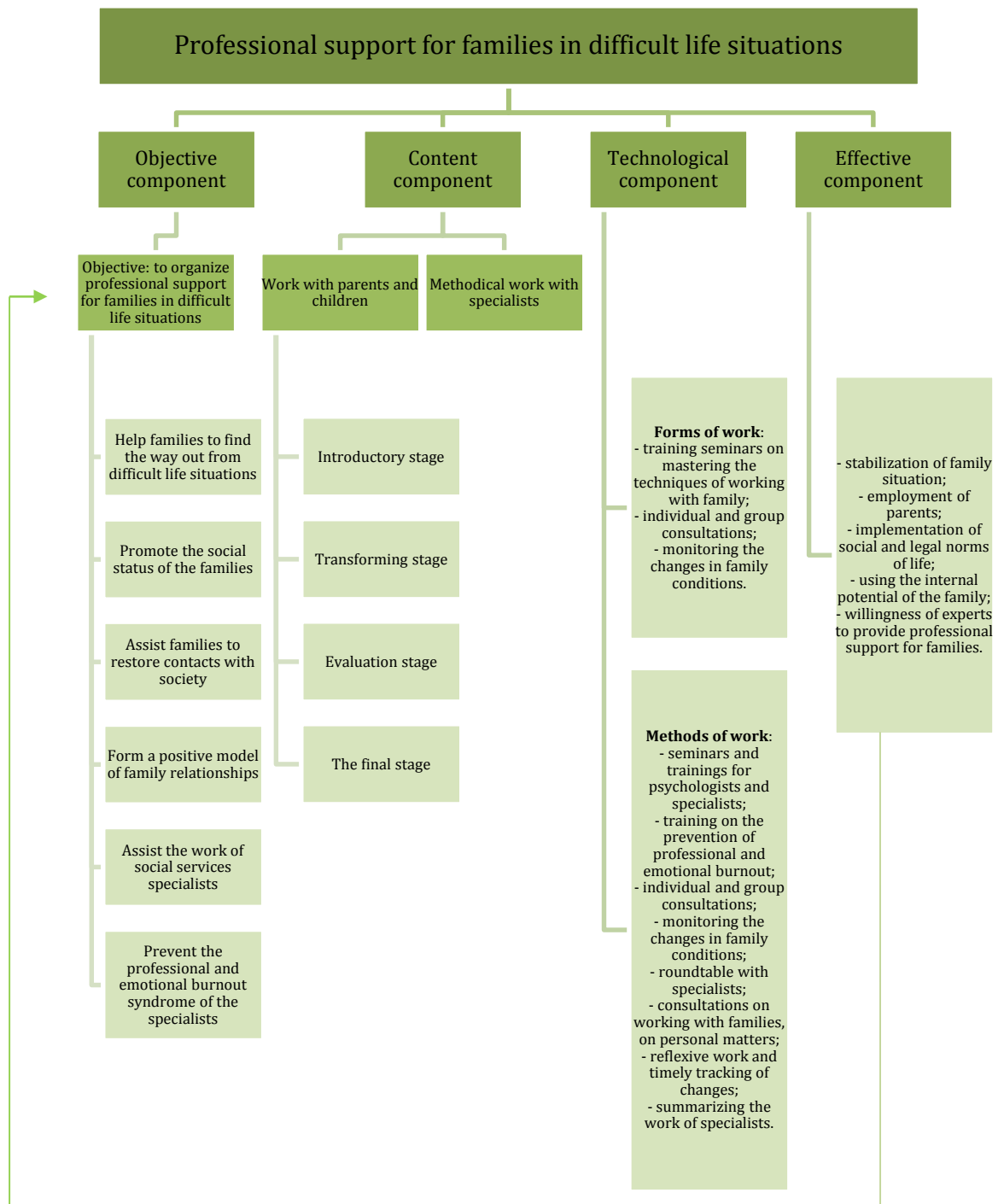
In the course of the study the author defined and realized a set of conditions necessary for the effective professional support for families in difficult life situations:

- early diagnosis of families in a difficult situations and in need of assistance from social services;
- complex and systematic support for families in difficult life situations;
- organization of activities aimed at improving the professional competence of social workers to provide a high quality care to families in difficult situations;
- interagency cooperation of departments at various levels.

In order to test the effectiveness of the experimental complex of the above conditions, researcher has used such techniques as participant observation and peer review. As a result, the following changes in families' social and intra-family life were marked:

- stabilization of family situation;
- employment of parents;
- implementation of social and law norms by dysfunctional parents;
- growth of interagency cooperation;
- implementation of internal family potential;
- growth of specialists' interest in complex family support.

Re-diagnosis of the overall index of social well-being of the family has indicated that the indicators of five families are within acceptable standards, but one family is at a high risk group (<21).



**Figure 1.** Model of professional support of families in difficult life situations

## DISCUSSION

The role of family in socialization has been noted by A.V. Mudrik (2005) and L.V. Mardahaev (2010). In present science family is considered as the most important institute of socialization, as a factor of child's socialization. Family in difficult life situation is analyzed as a special group of families, as an object of professional support by the social workers, social pedagogues, psychologists and other specialists.

Family in a difficult life situation as a social problem is analyzed by G. Semya (2004), I. S. Ganishina (2006), M. Chernish (2009). Psychology of asocial families is

analyzed in scientific works of V. M. Tseluyko (2004), T. Shulga (2005). The research works of V. N. Oslon (2006), G. V. Semya (2004), G. I. Gaysina (2013) are devoted to the problems of foster families.

In psychology and pedagogy support is defined as an integrative technology of socio-psychological assistance to the family and person. It is regarded as a form of social patronage (Arhangelskiy, 2000). The ideas of necessary families' support are developed by I. Dubrovina (2005). She considers the support as a system of professional activity for creating conditions for successful social adaptation of a person. Most scientists say that the essence of the support is to create conditions for the person's transition from help to self-help.

Nevertheless, the problem of effective families' complex support is not deeply studied in theory and practice of social work, pedagogy and psychology.

## CONCLUSION

Professional support is the integrated and complex system of social and socio-psychological assistance to the families in difficult life situations. It is organized by the social services and is aimed at recovery of educational and social-adaptive functions of the families.

The model of effective professional support for families in difficult life situations provided by social workers, psychologists and other specialists includes two directions: 1) support of parents and children; 2) methodical work with specialists of social services.

Today family supporting is a special and priority form of social, psychological and educational assistance – patronage.

The results of experimental work have proved the effectiveness of the developed program of professional family support in the social services activities.

It has been proved that the professional support for families in difficult life situations involves complex support activities of specialists in families' social rehabilitation. It must be realized in interaction with other subjects of families' support, taking into account the individual characteristics each family (structure, financial situation, character of family relations, particular qualities of difficult life situation). The specialists of social work supporting families in difficult life situations should have a high index of successful result motivation.

As a result of the theoretical analysis and the experimental research, the author has identified a set of conditions necessary for the social rehabilitation of families in difficult life situations. They make it possible to create a positive emotional climate in the process of their socialization.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Research materials and results may be used by specialists of social services to study and solve different problems of the families in difficult life situations. The identified conditions and tested program of socio-psychological family's support can help to improve the level of families' socialization.

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