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## THE CONTENT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT OF STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITIES OF UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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**ABSTRACT.** The article describes the content of the concept “social support” as a type of social security, outlining its purpose, tasks and functions. It reveals the essence of social support of students of higher education institutions and the significance of social psychological service in its realization. It highlights the features of social support of students at US universities on the basis of analysis of scientific publications. It describes the most common areas of activity and functions of the student services of the university, which plays a leading role in the social support of students in the United States. The article determines positive aspects of the foreign experience of the specified type of social security and indicates the possibility of its use in higher education institutions of Ukraine.

**Keywords:** social security; social support; student; university; social psychological service; student services; content; specialist.

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## Introduction

Social support of the population as a form of social security is an integral part of the social policy of the country and an integral part of the social protection system. It has been and will remain relevant at all times, as there are always categories of people in need. To such categories, besides unemployed, needy, orphan children, people with disabilities, etc., we also refer students. The peculiarity of students is that it is a homogeneous age group with a common type of activity – learning (voluntary and conscious), and the overall goal: getting higher education in the chosen specialty and creative realization in the learning process (Zvereva, 2012, p. 287). Social features of age, typical for students, are connected with transition from the dependent period of childhood and youth to the time of independent and responsible maturity. However, the lack of life experience, the need for personal development through self-education, self-improvement and self-realization in a rather unstable period of development of the country, the crisis of usual values, the lack of normative models of successful behavior, can transform a student into a maladjusted and socially insolvent person – a victim of unfavorable conditions of socialization (Kolyadenko, 2016, p. 134). That is why the creation of conditions for the full harmonious development of students, realization of their existing and potential personal and professional opportunities - their social support - is of particular importance today.

## Literature review

Questions of social support of young people have repeatedly been the subject of scientific research. The theoretical and practical aspects of the functioning of the psychological service in educational institutions are thoroughly covered in the writings of O. Bezpalko, I. Zvereva, I. Kovchina, S. Kolyadenko, T. Kravtsova, O. Gazman, N. Krylova, N. Mikhailova, S. Yusfina and others. However, the issue of the activities of the socio-psychological service in the system of higher education, the organization of social security and social support of students of higher education institutions in Ukraine has so far been studied quite fragmentary. Along with this, the analysis of the activities of higher education institutions abroad testifies to significant achievements in this area, as social work with students is done for a long time (for example, in the USA student services have been operating since the second half of the nineteenth century). Therefore, the feasibility of developing a given problem and the absence of its holistic scientific research led to the choice of the topic of our article. Its purpose is to highlight the content of social support for students in US universities and to identify opportunities for using positive international experience in higher education institutions in Ukraine. To fulfill the stated purpose, we have set several goals: to examine the content of the concept of "social support" as a form of social security and to clarify the essence of social support for students of higher education institutions; to identify the features of social support for students in US universities and to analyze its content; to find out the

possibility of applying a positive foreign experience of this type of social security for students in higher education institutions of Ukraine.

### **Presentation of the main material and research results.**

Social support, like social technology and technology of social work, is an important function of social workers and social protection agencies. In the dissertation by S. Prylypka indicates that social support (care) is a system of measures for material security at the expense of state and local budgets and other sources of financing of citizens who did not obtain for various reasons the legal right to receive pensions and other kinds of benefits, but who require social help and can not independently get out of a difficult situation. According to the author, social support is provided in the form of material assistance, social services and various benefits to the most vulnerable categories of the population on an individual basis after checking their subsistence means (Prylypko, 2007, p. 322). A. Kapska notes that social support is a complex of measures implemented by state, community, charitable and commercial organizations in order to establish human life and provide for its active participation in changing its own vital circumstances (Kapska, 2015, p. 196). According to O. Korchevna, social support is a system of socio-psychological tools and methods that promote the socio-professional self-identification of individuals in the process of forming their abilities, value orientations and self-awareness, increasing the competitiveness of the labor market and adapting to local conditions for the realization of their own professional careers (Korchevna, 2006, p. 247).

We agree in general with the above wording and consider the more acceptable for our study definition of social support, filed in the Encyclopedia for professionals in the social sphere. So, in I. Zvereva's opinion, social support is a system of measures carried out by the subjects of social and pedagogical work and aimed at solving problems of people in difficult living conditions by providing them with the help or necessary types of social services (Zvereva, 2012, p. 201). Since social support can be provided not only by social educators but also by social workers, we consider it possible to treat social support as a system of measures to create conditions that enable specialists of social services to create conditions for normal life of a person who is in difficult living conditions and to ensure the quality of its social protection.

Based on the analysis of a number of scientific publications, the main principles of social support of the population include: compliance with social standards established by law, targeting, accessibility, humanity, irreversibility (Kapska, 2015; Kolyadenko, 2016; Oleksyuk, 2017). G. Sen points out that social support has several functions, in particular: socially valuable (directs the development of social relations to enhance the role of mutual assistance and trust values); psychological (stimulates the person to use their own psychological reserves); economical (contributes to increasing the effectiveness of specific forms of human activity in the system of social division of

labor); integral (creates conditions for innovative initiative activity of a person) (Sen, 2007, p. 31). Such a list of functions is confirmed by the fact that social support has a different purpose, which, in its turn, once more updates the importance of this type of social security.

As the basis for determining the social support of students is the interpretation of the identified process by S. Kolyadenko as the activity of providing preventive and operational assistance to the individual (student, teacher), the team (academic group) in solving their social and psychological and pedagogical problems, aimed at creating conditions and ensuring the most successful support of these categories of clients, stimulating awareness of the essence of the problem that arose (emerged), the means of overcoming it, as well as pushing for independence and activities in it (Kolyadenko, 2016, p. 135). We agree with N. Oleksyuk's statement that, based on the specifics of the category of persons to whom support is provided, the process may include not only direct assistance, stimulation of awareness of the problem and activity in its solution, but also a learning process to overcome existing disadvantages or avoidance of the future one (Oleksyuk, 2017, p. 99). Thus, in our understanding, social support for students is the assistance of a social service specialist (system of measures of material and immaterial nature) to a client (a student, an academic group) in preventing the emergence or resolution of problems (social, psychological, pedagogical, economic, domestic) which he can not handle himself. Social support is intended not only to prevent or solve problems that arise in the student's environment, but also to motivate the student to self-development, self-determination and self-realization, to support his initiative and creativity. The content of social support depends on the specifics of each individual case, and the effectiveness is determined by the level of satisfaction of the social needs of the client at optimal cost.

The function of social support of students in institutions of higher education of Ukraine is performed by psychological (social-psychological) services. The experience of their work is relatively small – the first services in the higher education establishments of Ukraine were formed in 1991, the content of their activities is determined by the Charter of the educational institution, the functions vary according to the problems that the student encounters. According to S. Kolyadenko, they relate the technology of psychological support of the student to the stages of his training: adaptation, intensification and identification (Kolyadenko, 2016, p. 136). In general we agree with this approach but we believe that the segregation of the stages is somewhat arbitrary because the nature of the problems that a student faces is individual in each single case, as is individual the student's experience in preventing and overcoming them (for example, the first-year students adapt to a new way of life at different speeds and not always need support).

The study of the activities of similar services in institutions of higher education abroad allows us to conclude on its content, versatility and efficiency, and actualizes the

need for a detailed analysis of this activity in order to distinguish positive experiences for Ukraine and identify opportunities for its use.

The huge experience of this type of social work with students is piled up in US educational institutions, where student services are working from the second half of the nineteenth century. The functions of these services are extremely diverse, which allows us to anticipate all possible student-related problems and manifests themselves in the following areas of support for students: low income students (funding for tuition, textbooks, fuel, childcare facilities for students with kids); students with disabilities (maintenance, recording of textbooks on audio, purchase of educational materials, executed in the font for the blind, creation of subtitles for video materials); military; students who come to study from other countries; those who have problems with prolonged illness, violence, depression, the organization of their own living space or the use of time, as well as those who are lagging behind in learning (Bok, 1990, p. 9). In addition to these functions, student services at the universities of the United States take care of enrolling of new students, compiling their individual training plans, transferring students from other universities, choosing a future profession (for those who are not declare by specialization), excursions and leisure activities, issuing references and diplomas.

Particular attention, in our opinion, deserves the support of those who take on-line courses (Jordan, 1990, p. 261-263).

The work of student services of universities is provided by relevant specialists (consultants, advisers). The variety of functions they perform requires special training. Thus, these specialists enroll in two-year master's programs, which include the study of psychology, law, communication, conflict, counseling, management, other disciplines, as well as individual and group work practices. Sometimes (in the case of student lagging in studying, choosing a specialization, etc.) these functions are performed by university teachers (James, 1992, pp. 84-86).

Based on the above, we believe that social support for students in higher education institutions of Ukraine has much in common with similar activities of student services at US universities. However, it can be optimized by expanding its scope to distance education and organizing special training for specialists working in social psychological (psychological) services.

## **Conclusions**

Social support of students in institutions of higher education is extremely necessary at the present stage of development of society. It is designed not only to protect students from life's disadvantages, but also to promote their full personal and intellectual development at all stages of learning. An analysis of many years of experience in the functioning of student services at US universities allows them to deepen their understanding of their role in providing social support to various student categories and

to expand the range of social services provided to higher education graduates in the process of their vocational training.

**Prospects for further research.** In our opinion, the technology of social support for various categories of students in the United States (especially for militaryservicemen and newcomers, as well as for those who receive education on a distance basis)and the system of training the workersfor student services profession are worththe further in-depth study.

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## ЗМІСТ СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ ПІДТРИМКИ СТУДЕНТІВ В УНІВЕРСИТЕТАХ СПОЛУЧЕНИХ ШТАТІВ АМЕРИКИ

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**Анотація.** У статті розкрито зміст поняття «соціальна підтримка» як виду соціального забезпечення, що є частиною соціальної політики країни та невід'ємною складовою системи соціального захисту населення; окреслено її мету, завдання та функції. Соціальна підтримка трактується як система заходів щодо створення умов для нормального життя людини, що перебуває у складних життєвих обставинах, та забезпечити її якісний соціальний захист.

З'ясовано сутність соціальної підтримки студентів закладів вищої освіти та значення соціально-психологічної служби у її здійсненні. Встановлено, що соціальна підтримка студентів – це допомога фахівця з соціальних служб (система дій матеріального та нематеріального характеру) клієнту (студенту, академічній групі) у запобіганні або вирішенні проблем (соціальних, психологічних, педагогічних, економічних та побутових), з якими він не може впоратися самостійно. Зміст соціальної підтримки студента залежить від специфіки кожного окремого випадку, а ефективність визначається рівнем задоволення соціальних потреб клієнта за оптимальних витрат.

На основі аналізу наукових публікацій виділено особливості соціальної підтримки студентів в університетах США. Схарактеризовано найбільш поширені напрями діяльності та функції студентської служби університету, яка відіграє провідну роль в соціальній підтримці студентів у США. Встановлено, що робота студентських служб університетів забезпечується відповідними фахівцями (консультантами), які пройшли відповідну підготовку. З'ясовано, що студентські служби університетів працюють із студентами: з низьким рівнем доходу; з інвалідністю; -військовослужбовцями; іноземцями; з особливими освітніми проблемами тощо. Особливої уваги заслуговує підтримка тих, хто здобуває освіту через Інтернет.

Визначено позитивні сторони закордонного досвіду означеного виду соціального забезпечення й вказано на можливості його використання у закладах вищої освіти України.

**Ключові слова:** соціальне забезпечення; соціальна підтримка; студент; університет; соціально-психологічна служба; студентська служба; зміст; фахівець.

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