

## Trauma-informed education in a global context: interdisciplinary approaches to building resilience in primary school students

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**Abstract.** *The article highlights the theoretical and practical aspects of implementing a trauma-informed approach in the educational process, particularly in primary schools. It outlines the principles of creating an emotionally safe environment, building resilience in students, and supporting teachers in their work with children who have experienced traumatic events. It analyzes international experience (in particular, the principles of ITIPPS), the results of implementing partnership models in schools, as well as Ukrainian initiatives, in particular the EU4YOUTH project. It considers teacher training, the need for supervision, online resources, and cross-sectoral interaction to foster a culture of support and trust in education.*

**Keywords:** *trauma-informed education, emotional safety, psychological resilience, primary school, teacher support.*

Over the past few decades, there has been a growing understanding in the field of education that schools cannot exist in isolation from the social, emotional, and psychological challenges that children face. Educational institutions, especially those working with younger school-age students, are increasingly becoming places where the effects of childhood trauma caused by war, violence, poverty, loss of parents, internal displacement, or chronic stress are manifested. In this context, there is a need for a new pedagogical approach – trauma-informed education, which involves not only academic learning but also the creation of a safe, supportive environment for the child's development and rehabilitation.

Trauma-informed education is an educational model that recognizes the impact of traumatic events on a child's learning process, behavior, and emotional state and adapts teaching methods accordingly. This is not just about individual interventions by psychologists, but a systematic approach that encompasses teaching practices, school policy, the physical environment, curricula, and most importantly, the relationships between all participants in the educational process. This approach is based on the principles of empathy, care, trust, transparency, fairness, equality, and improving the quality of life for every child in the educational environment.

At the international level, one of the most influential initiatives in this area has been the development of the ITIPPS (International Trauma-Informed Practice Principles for Schools) principles, presented in a study by K. Martin and co-authors. These principles are based on the recognition of different types of trauma (emotional, physical, collective) and are aimed at building stable and trusting relationships between students and teachers, developing emotional literacy, and creating a predictable and safe school environment. One of the key positions is to involve parents and the community in shared responsibility for the well-being of children. ITIPPS principles

cover non-discrimination policies, inclusion practices, mental health support, and strengthening teachers' competence in working with traumatized students [3].

Another important study that deepens the understanding of this approach is presented by T. Bellamy and co-authors. It describes a partnership approach to shaping a culture of school behavior based on cultural sensitivity and trauma awareness. The experience of schools that have implemented this model shows a decrease in destructive behavior, an increase in academic achievement, and an increase in the emotional well-being of students. The model is based on cross-sectoral interaction: teachers, administrators, social workers, parents, and children themselves are active participants in the changes. School teams develop individual intervention plans, create “quiet zones,” support self-regulation practices, teach emotional literacy, and promote the development of nonviolent conflict resolution skills [4].

In countries that have experienced or are experiencing conflict, considerable attention is paid to creating an educational environment that can respond to the needs of traumatized children. Ukraine is no exception in this context. After 2022, the educational community faced the task of not only restoring the educational process, but also overcoming the psychological consequences of the war. The issue of developing psychological resilience in primary school students became particularly relevant. Contemporary research confirms that resilience is not an innate quality but is formed through interaction with adults, access to resources, and a stable environment. The task of the school is to create a space where children feel recognized, heard, and protected.

In this context, the international project “EU4YOUTH – Post-conflict Education and Trauma-Informed Pedagogy Programme,” implemented with the support of the EU in cooperation between the Dragomanov Ukrainian State University and Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania), is indicative. The programme aims to introduce trauma-informed practices into the training of primary school teachers, create an emotionally safe environment, develop student resilience and support teachers in their work with psychologically traumatised children. One of the components of the program is the development of teaching materials, training courses, and supervision for teachers working in regions affected by the war.

D. Prokhorenko draws attention to the specific characteristics of children with special educational needs in the context of psychological trauma. The author analyzes how chronic stress affects the behavior, social skills, and learning abilities of such students. The conclusion is clear: without taking traumatic experiences into account, a child's individual educational trajectory will not be effective. This requires not only an inclusive but also a trauma-informed approach. Adapted teaching methods, more time for tasks, clear structuring of lessons, and regular emotional contact between the student and an adult they trust are necessary [1].

T. Holovatenko raises the issue of preparing future teachers to implement a trauma-informed paradigm. The author presents a syllabus concept that includes basic psychological training, understanding the neurophysiology of trauma, principles of empathetic communication, and building safe educational relationships. Such training involves not only knowledge but also practical skills in self-regulation, reflection, and psychological hygiene for teachers, which is critically important in the context of mass

trauma. The education of future teachers should not only be subject-oriented, but also value- and emotionally-rich. This includes training in crisis response, developing algorithms for action in the event of a student's emotional dysregulation, as well as supervision and collective support [2].

It is worth noting the research by I. Yevdokimova, S. Vakylenko, and I. Vitkovska, which demonstrates the need to create electronic educational courses for teachers on the topic of trauma-informed approaches. As a result of focus groups, the authors found a high demand among primary school teachers for accessible, structured, and practice-oriented resources that help create an emotionally safe environment in the classroom. Online training is seen as an effective tool for supporting the teaching community, especially in conditions of remote access to specialists. Such courses should include video lessons, interactive exercises, methodological tips, case studies, interviews with experts, and tools for self-assessment of readiness for trauma-informed work [5].

Thus, trauma-informed education in the global and Ukrainian context appears to be a necessary condition for a high-quality and equitable school system. The interdisciplinary nature of this approach is evident in the interaction between pedagogy, psychology, social work, medicine, and administrative management. Building resilience in primary school students is only possible through a comprehensive transformation of the educational process, in which a trained teacher, a safe environment, and partnerships with families and communities play a key role.

In the future, the development of trauma-informed education requires the institutionalization of this approach: inclusion in state educational standards, university programs, certification of professional development, and standardization of school policies on student safety and well-being. Education should not only be knowledge-based, but also therapeutic, restorative, and capable of restoring children's faith in themselves, the world, and the future.

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