

Delivering mental health support to the forgotten people of Ukraine

An overview of FGIP's
Ukraine program 2025/2026



The forgotten people in Ukrainians' mental health care system

After more than a decade of war and three years into the full-scale invasion, the future of Ukraine is today at its most unstable peak. The latest events have led to a steep increase of levels of anxiety amongst the Ukrainian general population, and overload the existing but still basic mental health care sector in Ukraine. Many initiatives have been launched over the past years that offer general mental health support to the Ukrainian population – but not to everybody:

Serving military and veterans

At least 700,000 Ukrainian men and women have had front line experience and are exposed daily to death and destruction. Many have experienced the loss of family members and friends who died during the war, have personal connections with Prisoners of War or have themselves been Prisoners of War, or with other individuals that are themselves highly traumatized by their own experiences, such as their military peers. But only few receive adequate mental health support.

Children of parents who have been directly involved in the war

Children are amongst the most invisible forgotten groups of the war. When parents are mentally affected following their experience as soldier or front line responder, their children equally suffer – in silence. They have no means to understand and express their feelings, feel responsible for the challenges of their parents, and naturally suppress their own needs for their parents' benefit. Children who lost a parent at the frontline are particularly at risk of developing more severe mental health challenges.



A soldier father with suffering from PTSD

My children are worried that I am going to get angry or yell at them and stuff like that. It's normal behaviour for kids to give you the shits, but I just couldn't tolerate it. It just sends me nuts, I just lose my mind.

Human rights defenders, journalists and first responders along the frontline

Ukrainians human rights defenders and first responders are exposed daily to death and destruction following the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Many have experienced the loss of family members and friends who died during the war, have personal connections with Prisoners of War or to other individuals that are themselves highly traumatized by their own experiences. Professional burnout is the most common challenge in this profession, where regular communication, emotional empathy, and exceptional responsibility are required constantly. In addition, this group often prioritizes their work and does not take time for themselves.

Prisoners who have committed a crime following their ill mental health state

Prisoners' health depends on the quality of the prison medical ward, which is very underdeveloped still today, using a soviet-style approach of out-of-sight/out-of-mind. With a focus on bio-medical treatment, psycho-social services are often nonexistent. We know that as a direct consequence of traumatic experiences of the war, the crime rate in Ukraine will increase. Combined with a lack of care in the prison system, prisoners with ill mental health will enter a vicious cycle of recidivism and incarceration.



Andrij, 53 years old, from Dnipro

My city and the whole region are in the middle of the frontline, and we are regularly under attack from Russian missiles and drones. I have witnessed a lot of destruction, and helped many injured people after the attacks. I am usually a strong person, nothing brings me down so easily. But now, after so many months, I start having flashbacks of past attacks. I can't sleep anymore at night, and I feel constantly anxious. But I don't want to leave, my friends are here, this is my home.

Refugees

The war in Ukraine has led to an unprecedented number of refugees to neighboring and other countries. With the length of the war, many have gone back, but depending on the outcome, the next wave of those leaving the country to find safety elsewhere will increase exponentially. Those who leave face the double burden of living with their traumatic experiences and trying to build a new life in a country where they do not speak the language, while continuously worrying about their families and friends back home. With no access to mental health support in their native language, refugees are left alone.

Mental health professionals, carers, staff members and all those working and living with persons with mental health challenges

Given the increase in mental health challenges in the Ukrainian population since the beginning of the war, mental healthcare professionals face extreme challenges in trying to fulfill their professional duties and maintain a decent quality of patient care. With more individuals under their care, their workload has increased, and at the same time, many may show adverse mental health outcomes following their own traumatic experiences with the war (such as the loss of a family member or close friend, or the direct exposure to shelling).

Consequences of untreated mental health challenges

On the individual

- High stress levels, anxiety, panic attacks and depression
- High levels of social distancing from individuals with mental health conditions
- In some cases attempted suicide Steep increase in alcohol and drug abuse
- Especially soldiers, due to their fierce experiences on the frontline, are more likely to commit violent crimes

On the family

- High insecurity and constant fear of pushing a trigger
- Steep increase in domestic violence, especially in families with members working at the front line
- High divorce rates
- Amongst children and youth: regressing mental development, intensified behavioral problems, school drop out

On the society

- A mental health service system that will not be able to keep up with the expected influx of patients that seek for help
- As a consequence, an increase in unemployment, and in the long time in poverty
- An exponential increase in crime, thus an additional high insecurity for the society
- A growing lack of understanding for those who suffer will lead to a strong societal division

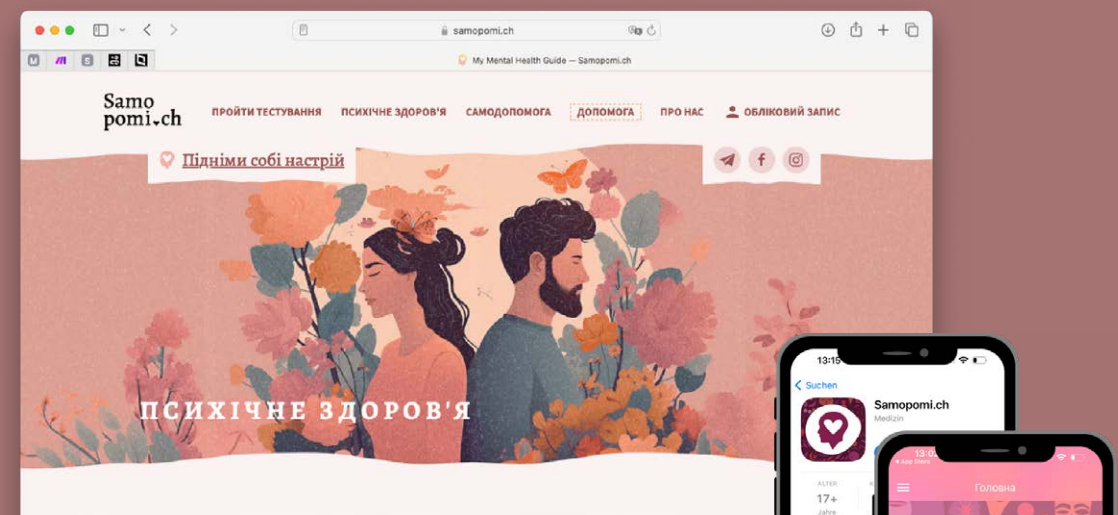


Nataliia, 38 years old, wife of soldier, mother of two children, specialized medical doctor and refugee

When my house was bombed, I decided to leave Ukraine for the safety of my children. My husband stayed behind to fulfil his duty, and is now serving with the military at the front. Three months after I left Ukraine, I felt how the adjustment to my new life and the worry for my husband started to have a toll on my mood and mental stability. I was constantly under tension, and I started to realize that I would not be able to continue to cope with the situation much longer. I didn't want to seek for help in Germany, I feared that the German therapists would misunderstand my worries and thoughts, the cultural differences between us are too strong.

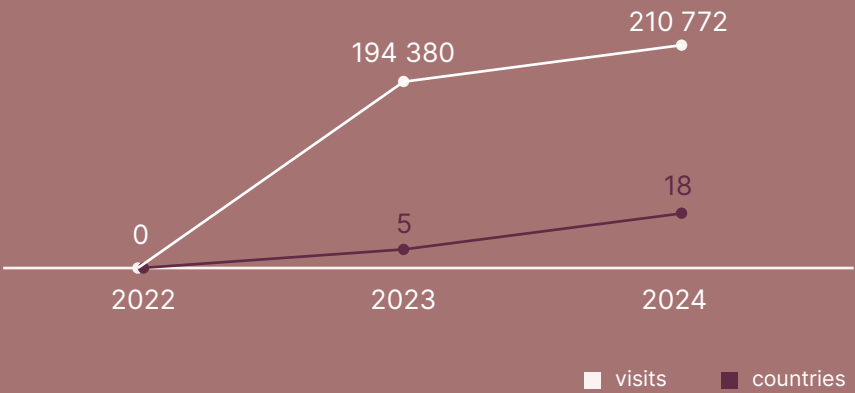
The FGIP is today countering the consequences of mental health challenges for all those who have been forgotten:

SAMOPOMICH – the online psychological aid program for all those directly impacted by the war



<https://www.samopomi.ch/>

Samopomich is a safe online program in Ukrainian language that combines evidence-based self-help information to both individuals in need of support and mental health professionals through a dedicated website (www.samopomi.ch), and scientifically developed tools for self-screening with online therapeutic consultations with counsellors trained in brief trauma-focused and trauma-informed counselling for those in need of professional support. A smartphone application complements the web-based services. For the forgotten people in Ukraine's mental health care system, the interventions are accessible free of charge.



Since 2022

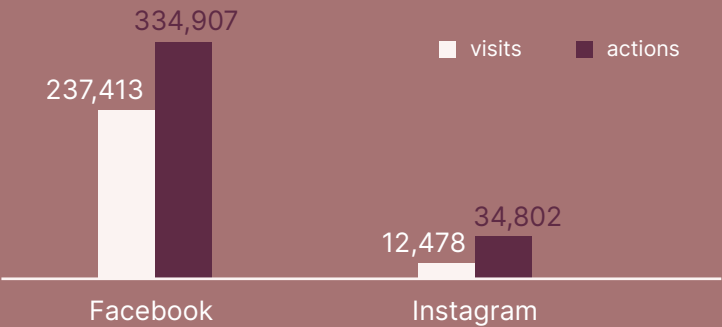
Over
17 000
self-screening tests
undertaken.

Over
150

First Line Responders have received a total of 1200 free counselling sessions.

In addition to its digital counselling services, Samopomich leverages social media to combat mental health stigma and promote self-care and self-help strategies. Practical advice is regularly shared through help-lines on the corresponding social media platforms like Facebook, Telegram, and Instagram.

Statistics on posts



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FederationGIP/>
<https://www.facebook.com/samopomich.for.ua>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/samopomi.ch/>

since 2022, our posts have been viewed over
70 million
times



Google Play



App Store

Expected number of total users in 2025/2026

600,000
website users

80,000
screening tests

1,000
Ukrainians who receive therapy

€100,000
costs

€30,000
Exceptional costs to upgrade the Smartphone application



Nataliia

I am enormously grateful for the opportunity to receive psychological help for free! I know how expensive this service is, especially in the Western countries, but even if free of charge counselling service would be offered me in Germany I am not sure that I would go for it. For me the opportunity to be treated by the Ukrainian counsellor online for free was like a life jacket.

Partners:

GIP-Tbilisi in Georgia and the Czech National Institute for Mental Health

VILNIUS CRISIS CENTER – counselling services for Ukrainian refugees and wounded Ukrainian military in the Rehabilitation Center of the Lithuanian Armed Forces

Lithuania is amongst the countries with the highest number of Ukrainian refugees. In summer 2022, just a few months after the invasion, FGIP and the Vilnius Mental Health Center established the Vilnius Psychotrauma Center. The center delivers trauma-informed counselling to Ukrainian refugees in need of professional help. In the course of 2023 we expanded our services to providing psychological counseling to Ukrainian military who are in rehabilitation at the Rehabilitation Center of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. All services are free of charge for those with the most urgent needs.

Since 2022



Expected number of treatments in 2025/2026



EXTREME STRESS RESILIENCE PROGRAM – protecting all those with direct exposure to extreme violence and death from developing mental health challenges

People living and working in Ukraine's front line regions, and in particular all those directly exposed to the war, such as journalists reporting from the frontline, human rights defenders collecting war crime evidence or serving military at the frontline are witnesses of extreme violence and horrific experiences. With no mental preparation, such extreme stress situations are common triggers of mental health challenges that may develop into severe mental health illnesses.

In 2025/2026, we will

- publish and disseminate advice and guidance on what to do during a mental overload in an extreme situation for journalists, human rights defenders, first line responders and others working in the pre-frontal regions of the country.
- develop and disseminate mental health resilience e-learning material for organizations and institutions to support staff members working near the frontline.
- develop a stand-alone and downloadable smartphone application based on the Operational Resilience Manual, that can be used by the military near the front line and during combat.
- disseminate 25 000 copies of Shady Places, a children book on living with a veteran parent who suffers from PTSD.
- develop, write a children's book to learn how to live with the death of a parent following the war (10,000 copies).

€20,000
costs

€40,000
costs

€75,000
costs

€50,000
costs

€23,000
costs



Almost every student at our school has encountered the topic of war, as someone in their family – father, brother, uncle, or grandfather – is or has been at war. The children listened to the book and provided feedback, sharing how they noticed something had happened to their father, how he had changed, and what they did in such cases. It has become easier to start conversations on painful topics not only with children but also with mothers. It's a pity they didn't exist earlier, as the situations described have been present since 2014.

Partners:

Veteran Mental Health Center of Excellence, GIP Ukraine.

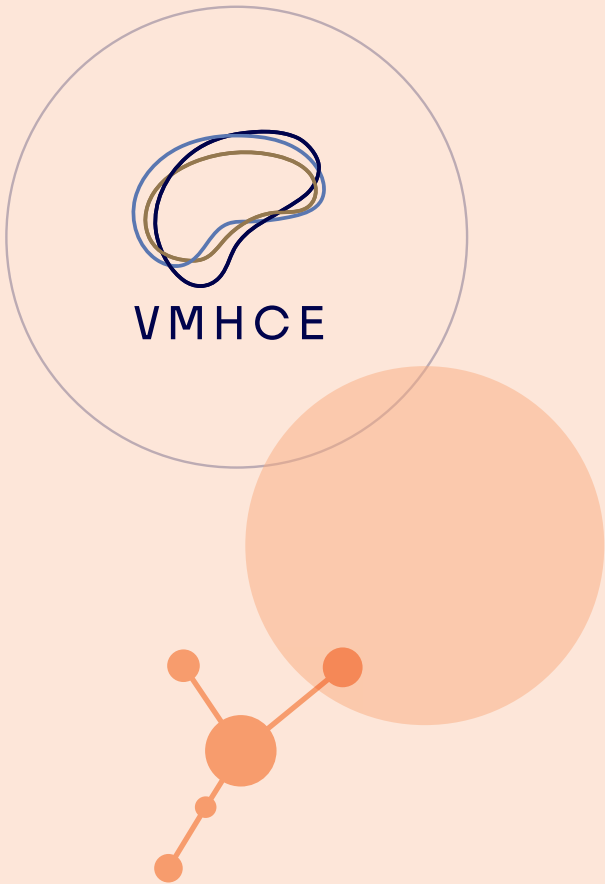
VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH CENTER OF EXCELLENCE (VMHCE) – developing a University-based knowledge and training center for mental health support to veterans and their families

In January 2024, FGIP, together with the Tara Shevchenko University in Kyiv and King’s College in London, established the Veteran Mental Health Center of Excellence (VMHCE) in Kyiv as a university-based knowledge and training center on veteran mental health. The VMHCE focuses on research, methodology and training, and will upon completion of the reconstruction also comprise a clinical department for the treatment of veterans with the most serious mental health challenges following their experience at the frontline, as well as their families. Veteran mental health rehabilitation services in Ukraine are limited in scope, and often only focus on the military and not their families and the communities in which they live. Most scientific research in the field has been undertaken in countries that have not fought wars on their own territory and have never been exposed to the new type of warfare that is now prevalent in Ukraine, being a trench war with excessive use of drones and improvised explosive devices. The center will engage in building capacity in Ukraine, develop state-of-the-art methodology and will stimulate the development of a chain of high-qualitative services all over Ukraine.

In the field of research, the center will develop a sound methodology that is evidence-based and developed on the basis of both international and Ukrainian best-practice, fits in the Ukrainian socio-cultural and economic context, and is sustainable within the current and post-war realities.

In the field of methodology, the center will provide recommendations with regard to treatment methods and other interventions that have proven to be effective and also to warn against those that are hazardous, ineffective or of which the efficacy is still a matter of experiment and debate.

In the field of training, the center will develop training packages (among others through an e-learning platform that is part of the application) that can be implemented on a contractual basis, provide full training seminars or cycles to veteran centers and other organizations, provide supervision and guidance, and give ad-hoc advice.



In 2025/2026, we will

- run the VMHCE with a team that consists of an Executive Director, Head of Research Director, Medical Director, an IT specialist, a program manager for peer-to-peer work, an office manager and a communications manager. In the course of time we will hire additional psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and other specialists according to our needs.
- open the clinical department for up to 15 veterans and their families by the end of 2025.
- prioritize research on working with families of military and veterans, innovative therapies, operational resilience and engaging communities in reintegration of veterans.
- open the training center for on-site training, e-learning and blended training programs.
- establish an ambulatory treatment program for military and veterans and their families.
- develop a mobile veteran mental health team.
- publish 3 E-learning modules to train Ukrainian mental health professionals and others working with veterans and their families.
- publish Ukrainian editions of books that are essential for the development of services for military, veterans and their families, e.g. books for children of military and veterans, and a manual on art therapy for military and veterans.



Partners: Tara Shevchenko University Kyiv, Ukraine and the King’s College, London, UK.

€220,000
staff cost

€80,000
Center costs, including living costs for veterans and families in the clinical department

€120,000
costs for learning center

€20,000
overall costs

€210,000
Publish 3 e-learning modules (70 000 each module)

€40,000
Books/Manuals

€200,000
Additional cost for building renovations

Professional mental health support in the context of war – training for Ukrainian mental health professionals and art therapists

The escalation of hostilities and fighting, strikes hitting civilian infrastructure, and major incidents are reaching levels of extreme and catastrophic severity. Gross violations against civilians, including grave violations against children, have exposed millions to increased trauma and mental health issues. As a consequence, an estimate of 30 percent of Ukrainians may be affected by mental health issues following trauma, with up to 15 million in need of psychosocial support and 3–4 million of those requiring direct interventions by mental health professionals. In psychiatry, estimates are that 10% of the institutions have been destroyed or damaged to such an extent that they cannot be used. The majority of Ukrainian mental health professionals is not trained to engage in trauma-informed and/or trauma-focused therapy.

In 2025/2026, we will

- give 4 in-depth training sessions to a maximum of 120 mental health professionals with regard to a trauma-informed and trauma-focused approach to therapy.
- develop 1 e-learning module on trauma-informed therapy for children, available to the general mental health profession over the VMHCE e-learning platform.
- develop trauma-informed guidance and training material, available through the Samopomich platform.
- train 40 Ukrainian artists to become art therapists.

€35,000
costs per session

€140,000
costs for all session

€60,000
costs

€20,000
costs

€75,000
costs



Partners:

GIP Ukraine, Czech National Institute for Mental Health.

Palliative care for Ukrainian soldiers – providing a protected environment for peaceful passing

Tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers, both men and women, have already lost their lives due to the invasion of Russia and the ongoing violent combats at the frontline. Others who were lethally wounded but survived often pay the high prices of reduced life expectancy due to the consequences of their injuries. The role of palliative care at the end of life is to relieve the suffering of patients and their families. It is designed to provide relief from pain and other symptoms, affirm life, envisage dying as a normal process, neither hasten nor postpone death, attend to the patient's psychological and spiritual beliefs, help the patient live as actively as he wishes until death and enhance his quality of life as feasible, and support the patient's family during the patient's illness and comfort the family and friends during bereavement.

In 2025/2026, we will

- support the development of palliative care for the lethally wounded by working with the Svyatenko Rehabilitation Clinic in Tsybli to develop a network of palliative centers across the country.

€500,000
costs



Photos:
Federico Quintana

Partners:

GIP Ukraine, Svyatenko Rehabilitation Clinic.

Countering the consequences of ill mental health – rehabilitation and mental health recovery in the criminal justice system

Unwanted criminal behavior is the most obvious negative consequence of ill mental health in the society. The most common punishment is the deprivation of liberty – a prison sentence. The very goal of imprisonment is to allow the person who committed a crime to leave the prison as a better person and to become a valuable member of society. *People in prison are genuinely in poorer* physical and mental health, with mental disorders twice as prevalent as in the general population. In Ukraine, this number will increase exponentially with the length of the war. A prison sentence for a person with ill mental health without taking into account such challenges does not serve the purpose of full rehabilitation. The FGIP is fully engaged to uphold the rights of persons with mental health challenges in the criminal justice system for a fair trial, adequate treatment while in prison and to leave prison mentally stable and has developed over the past two years three prison mental health units, in Zhitomyr, Vinnytsa and a larger one in Drohobych that specializes in veterans who entered the prison system as a result of crimes caused by war trauma.

In 2025/2026, we will

- invest in adequate prison infrastructure by developing a new mental health ward in the prison in Dnipro.
- raise awareness of the expected influx of veterans with mental health challenges as a consequence of their experiences on the frontline.
- develop and implement four training for prison staff on the treatment of inmates with mental health challenges.
- develop and implement two training of the judiciary and law enforcement on upholding the rights of persons with mental health challenges during investigation, trial and sentencing.
- develop adequate training material to support prison staff to uphold and strengthen their own mental health when constantly exposed to those with traumatic experiences, available over Samopomich.

€70,000
costs

€10,000
costs

€80,000
costs

€50,000
costs

€20,000
costs

“ Given almost all people in prison will be released at some point, improving their health during imprisonment has the potential to improve the health of the communities to which they will return.

How you can help

Your support is vital for the forgotten people in Ukrainian’s mental health care system, and will make an important difference. As a lean organisation, we ensure that your donation is spent in the most impactful way. Every donation counts, and regularly update our donors and supporters on what we have done, and how your support has helped. Given the current volatile situation in Ukraine, we use our Dutch bank account, and donations are tax deductible.

Donate

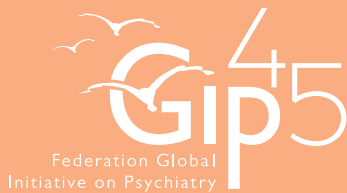


Company requisites:

Human Rights in Mental Health-FGIP
P.O. Box 1956, 1200 BZ Hilversum, The Netherlands
Registration code 52712389

Non-VAT payer
Bank: ING
Account #: NL46 INGB 0006 0707 13
Account holder: Federation Global Initiative on Psychiatry
BIC of the bank: INGBNL2A
Reference: Ukraine / or specify

Checks drawn on a US bank can be made out to “GIP-USA” and sent to our Netherlands address. Our partner GIP-USA has 501(c) status and therefore all US donations are equally tax-deductible.



The **Federation Global Initiative on Psychiatry (FGIP)** began in 1980 as a volunteer human rights organization, originally named the **International Association on the Political Use of Psychiatry (IAPUP)**, aimed at ending the incarceration of dissidents in psychiatric hospitals.

Over time, FGIP built a global network of allies from health, legal, and policy sectors, allowing it to remain adaptable and committed to ethical mental health care. With an initial focus on Central & Eastern Europe, the FGIP sees itself today at the **front guard of mental health innovation**, maximally using all the technical possibilities of the digital age **to help underserved communities** around the world to access mental health services and building a resilient mental health.

Today, FGIP acts as an **umbrella organization** for independent members, each advancing ethical and humane mental health care. The federation prioritizes human rights in mental health, especially for underserved communities victims of state repression, war, and those in closed environments like prisons. FGIP fills critical gaps, advocating for those with no one else to stand up for their rights.

Our values

Everything we do is based on the deeply enshrined values of the FGIP and all its member organizations. They are guided by the principle that **all people have dignity by themselves** regardless of their capacity:

- **Respect**
- **Trust**
- **Inclusion**
- **Humanity**
- **Friendship**
- **Anti-Totalitarianism**

Contacts

Mailing address: P.O. Box 1956, 1200 BZ Hilversum, The Netherlands
E-mail: rvvoren@gip-global.org
Website: www.fgip-global.org
Linkedin: Human Rights in Mental Health-FGIP

