

Supervision group member personal experience

Since the beginning of the war, ESTSS has introduced free supervision support groups for Ukrainian mental health professionals conducted by colleagues from ESTSS' international network. These groups are a place where we can discuss difficult topics in the work of a crisis psychologist and trauma therapist. Working with those whose homes were destroyed, with injured combatants who lost sight or limbs, cases dealing with wounded children, families that have been separated, women, children and men who have survived violence and torture. These topics are very difficult and require a stable and safe place to discuss and to find resources for continuing psychotherapeutic interventions.

Also, it is needless to say that we, Ukrainian mental health professionals, are facing the same reality as our clients. Many of us experienced traumatic events, such as occupation, shelling, air raids, separation from family. Some of us are mothers or spouses of combatants fighting on the front-line, some are even widows or mothers who lost their sons in the war. Therefore, the state of specialists is in many respects similar to the state of clients who turn to them. Consequently, we ourselves require support. Actually, supervisions take care not only of the clinical picture, but mainly give us psychologists and psychotherapists the opportunity to share their experiences with each other and find understanding and support of colleagues.

In addition, these supervisions allow us to look at the cases in a cross-cultural context: how it happened in other wars, what decisions were made, how they were later evaluated in history, and in what ways we are experiencing our transgenerational trauma.

I personally think that the importance of these groups for Ukrainian mental health professionals is impossible to overestimate, as they are a powerful tool for self-care and professional hygiene, which might make it possible to prevent burn out.