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Trust and Mutual Assistance as Moral and Ethical Values in Maintaining Mental Health under the Conditions of Pandemic

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Abstract: The article reveals trust and mutual assistance as moral and ethical factors in mental health maintaining in a pandemic. Humanization of social relations, new ethics, development of moral and ethical values is the guarantee and necessary condition for the survival of mankind under conditions of planetary instability and proneness to conflict. These values help a person to overcome the limits of individual existence, help him to maintain harmony with the world around him and with himself, to foster tolerance and flexibility in relations with other people, to focus upon an adequate understanding of slings and arrows of life in the COVID-19 pandemic. The moral and ethical values of trust and mutual assistance contribute to a person's ability to mutual tolerance and empathy in accepting the Other, cultivating spiritual flexibility and willingness to compromise, focusing upon understanding life values and priorities other than usual, recognising social equality, because all people are equally valuable.

Keywords: *trust and mutual assistance, pandemic, moral and ethical factors, maintaining mental health.*

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a large-scale and systemic crisis that affected all spheres of public life. In general, it marked the end of a stable and established society, reduced the level of predictability of processes and ways of further development and functioning of society, and so forth. Pandemic sentiments have brought serious dissonance into the cultural and spiritual sphere of human life, caused a reconsideration of established values and spiritual priorities, exacerbated the problems of persons' physical and mental health. Attempts to save lives and preserve physical health have slightly given lower priority to the mental and spiritual spheres of human life. Nevertheless, it was in vain. The new context of social reality significantly affects human existence. The destruction and variability of habitual social structures and norms liberates a person and dispatches him into free solitary sailing through the raging waves of modernity. Saving the drowning has truly become the business of the drowning themselves. The events of social life, changing with a kaleidoscopic mosaic, give rise to a fragmentary worldview and world perception, and thus to a crisis of self-identification of a person accustomed to stability and order. The person is in a space of danger, disorder, potential risks that have not yet been encountered before. This causes his tension in relations with nature and society and with himself. The person feels less and less like the creator and master of his own destiny, as becomes hostage to the created world, meeting the realities of the future every second and showing a lack of ability to adapt to swift-flowing life.

Postmodern reality is different from other epochs. They are characterized by fragmentation, game, probability. Standardization, massification of society, belief in progress, utopian hopes for unlimited human domination over nature, declining public confidence in hierarchical institutions, bureaucratization and centralization, etc. lose their significance.

In postmodern society, information becomes a valuable commodity. Former values - power, money, exchange, production, began to be deconstructed. Everything turns into a game, the elite one - into a mass one, good and evil are replaced by ambivalence, consumption is fetishized. Powerful universals are rejected, and the main violin begins to play virtual reality. Thus, the change of the epoch causes a change of the system of values. Values cultivated in previous epochs are leveled or revised.

At the same time, postmodernism should not be understood as a denial of past spiritual and value achievements. Rather, it is a kind of

modern civilization break, a period of manifestation of social and natural problems of a new quality. Postmodernism is not so much a denial as an analysis of universal values in the face of an infinite number of uncertainties. This encourages the development and analysis of multidimensional ideas about the system of spiritual and value priorities in the postmodern context.

It is obvious that the system of value and moral priorities, which have been determined and formed by past generations, is not disappearing, but only being modified depending on the values and priorities of the postmodern. The maintenance and cultivation of spiritual values is an important basis for the existence of human community. This fact is evidenced by the moments of crisis in society, in particular the period of the pandemic.

Postmodernism gives modern man a chance and an opportunity to intuitively navigate the world of the possible and the changing, spiritual values and priorities remain the mainstay.

2. Axiological aspects of human presence in a pandemic: the focus of scientific research

Some issues on scarcity in the Pandemic, namely in US cities and states with extensive community transmission of COVID-19 revealed in the work of (Solomon, Wynia & Gostin, 2020). Sergio G. Litewka and Elizabeth Heitman point out that the COVID-19 pandemic is a critical test for the already overburdened and mostly underfunded public healthcare systems of Latin America. As ethical expertise in Latin America focuses on research ethics, few hospitals in the region have functioning clinical ethics committees or clinical ethics policy, forcing healthcare personnel to make excruciating treatment decisions in an environment dominated by material scarcity and public distrust (Litewka, Heitman, 2020).

E. Laslo writes about the painful and dangerous conflicts of this process indicating on the uncoordinated interaction between different social institutions, the desire of certain social institutions to receive resources and development opportunities at the expense of others. Disturbance of mutual equilibrium between different social systems causes "illnesses" of society, their symptomatology and results in various crises in character and scale. The author state that universe has an amazing level of coherence (the mutual relation between parts of a system is understood, that a coherent system acts as a single, though complex entity). (Laslo, 2012).

Such scientists as Lawrence O. Gostin, Eric A. Friedman, and Sarah A. Wetter, in their work presented such issues as: “What ethical duties do we

owe to vulnerable people separated from their families and communities? And how do we ethically and legally balance public health with civil liberties?" (Gostin, Friedman, Wetter, 2020). The realities of today prove that the situation of the pandemic will cause not only a global health crisis, but also an economic, political, socio-cultural one. Analyzing the current crisis caused by the pandemic, Latour points out that mankind should prepare for other crises that have already been encountered by mankind, but have not yet fully realized the catastrophic consequences (in particular, he speaks about the danger of the climate crisis and its occurrence as a result of mindless human activity). In general, B. Latour predicts that in the future, humanity will have to live in a situation of permanent crisis (Latour, 2020).

Other scholar Chiara Mannelli, revealed an ethical approach to healthcare choices in Italy, as Italy has so far been the most severely hit European country and demand for critical care in the northern region (Mannelli, 2020). The situation of "unity" of the world causes the established system of values, as each epoch produces its worldviews and moral orientations, which outline its spiritual face and new horizons of its progress focusing on understanding life values (Hanaba, Miroshnichenko, Shumovetska, Makohonchuk, Halimov, & Bloshchynskyi, 2019). In this case topical is the research by Catalina Maria Georgescu, who revealed the problem of identity and realization of European values in the media using a postmodern methodology, namely the postmodernity of European integration (Georgescu, 2018).

Relevant is the study on the transformation of values and the mentality of young people under the influence of cultural diversity (Pehoiu, 2018). Noteworthy is the research of Claudia Salceanu on a comparative analysis of the value system in society between different generations of people. In this way, she showed the possibilities of building paths of a tolerant environment and coexistence of different generations (Sălceanu, 2019).

In interaction with another culture, a person acquires new experiences and new skills. In the article of philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy headlined "Communovirus", the author states that the virus communicates us as it brings everyone to the ground of equality and brings us together to counteract it. (Nancy, 2020). That is why, despite the fact that we are isolated by the state institutions taking custodial care of us as a protection, we are experiencing isolation as a certain deprivation. It should be mentioned that communication as a traditional and fundamental method of obtaining knowledge is of particular importance. Such scholars as I. Melnychuk, N. Lupak, O. Pryshlyak and I. Bloshchynskyi think that "the

expansion of new and traditional media through the transformation of information into knowledge" is very important for obtaining knowledge with a help of various communication channels and communication forms" (Melnychuk, Lupak, Pryshlyak & Bloshchynskyi, 2019). According to I. Melnychuk, L. Rebukha, T. Zavgrodnia & I. Bloshchynskyi, self-education helps the people to successfully implement their expertise both in the changing conditions of the modern world and in future professional activities as it broadens their outlook (Melnychuk, Rebukha, Zavgrodnia & Bloshchynskyi, 2018).

Besides, the ability to realize amazing opportunities and incredible desires contains a number of warnings and threats. The ability to influence persons' intellectual, emotional, moral, spiritual and physical substantiality significantly on the socio-cultural nature of the Internet as a social network should be also considered. Some authors consider the Internet as a complex, self-organized and non-linear entity that affects a person's life. The network could substitute the real world, presenting the virtual, fictional and perfect world for a person (Turculet, Achiricesei & Mutu, 2017).

As it was mentioned that a characteristic feature of the postmodern world is globalization and communication with constant growth of the amount of information, that demand a qualitatively new level of teaching the students both basic and professional disciplines, providing all participants of the educational process with intellectual, psychological and moral readiness for the work in new conditions (Oliver, 2006). Such scholars as G. Pânişoară, I. Pânişoară, C. Sandu & R. Chirca (Neacşu) studied the status of positive psychology strengths within the Romanian school in the digital society and identified the possible correlations between the strengths that are taught in school and those which are necessary for reaching personal success. (Pânişoară, Pânişoară, Sandu, & Chirca (Neacşu), 2017).

In the postmodern era, the fundamental foundations of the human soul fluctuated. They testified to the complex and contradictory processes of reassessment of the axiological reorientation of modern man which indicate the consistency that is understood as the mutual sensitivity as well as to other environmental systems. Despite the painful conflicts of this process, in a postmodern context, a creative person receives an unprecedented freedom based on a constructive basis of spirituality, through which a person acquires the ability to distance himself from society and independently critically comprehend all aspects and spheres of his life. In this case it also gives hope that pandemic will help humanity to realize the dangers of global separation. Global co-operation will become a victory not only over the coronavirus,

but also over all future epidemics and crises of the twentieth century. (Hanaba, Mysechko, Bloshchynskyi, 2020).

The objective of the article *is* to substantiate trust and mutual assistance as moral and ethical values in maintaining mental health under the conditions of pandemic.

3. Moral and ethical values are an important factor in maintaining human mental health in a pandemic.

Let us note that there is a close relationship between mental and physical well-being. Mental development of the personality creates important preconditions for healthy functioning and development of physical health. Thoughts, emotions, feelings of people directly affect their physical condition, general well-being and quality of life. Mental health allows a person to demonstrate resilience to a number of slings and arrows of life, to find the strength and motivation to live in a crisis "coronavirus society". The urgency of the mental health problem in a pandemic society has been exacerbated by disappointing statistics during recent months. Fear of illness, social isolation, bombardment from all sides with horrible statistics and advice on how to protect oneself from illness, uncertainty about the future, etc. significantly affect a person's mental and psycho-emotional state, increasing his anxiety and worry, increasing number of stresses and mental disorders. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the WHO is refraining from predicting the duration of the coronavirus epidemic and the possibility of overcoming it in the near future. Accordingly, mental health problems will continue to become more acute and widespread, and therefore need to find and outline strategies to address them. Let us note that the idea of the need to nurture the moral and ethical values of the individual is fundamental despite the diversity of approaches and opinions on improving mental health in the "Coronavirus society". The spiritual realm of a person is not only closely interconnected with mental processes; it largely determines, produces and corrects them. It is obvious that cultivating a system of moral values and spiritual guidelines will help a person to overcome the shoals of life, maintain harmony with the world around him and with himself, cultivate tolerance and flexibility in relations with other people, focus upon adequate understanding of life problems. Thus, moral and ethical values are an important factor in maintaining human mental health, as they contribute to the harmonious interaction of a human being with the world around him. We will only outline the benchmarks of trust and mutual assistance in mental health maintaining in this article given the fact that the problem of the

impact of moral and ethical values upon human mental health is complex and multifaceted one. Why trust and mutual assistance? The choice is explained by the fact that in crisis moments of social life they are the fundamental and relevant ones in the spiritual and mental spheres of human life.

4. Trust is the basis of mutual assistance and tolerance towards other people.

Trust is a certain state of psychological inner peace, which is manifested in the absence of rueful feelings and insecurities. If a person cultivates trust, then it is guaranteed that he is counting upon loyalty and common interests. It is a human good that presupposes confidence in the decency and candour of the other party and is measured in the belief in honesty and benevolence. Why does a person need trust? Because a person needs another person, the feeling that there are those who are not just listening, but also able to understand, support. In a pandemic, trust not only promotes mutual understanding and support, but also helps to comply with a number of rules adopted by state institutions. When people trust the authorities, who report scientifically substantiated facts, citizens can behave properly on their own. Imagine you wash your hands. Soap is one of the greatest achievements in hygiene. This one simple act saves millions of lives every year. Today, we take it for granted. Nevertheless, scientists have proved the importance of this process only in the nineteenth century. Today, billions of earthlings use soap, not because of fear of a "soap police", but because they know the scientific basis of the action, because we trust (Hanaba, Mysechko, & Bloshchynskyi, 2020).

Trust is the basis of mutual assistance and tolerance towards other people. The spread of a pandemic involves isolation and social distance. These, at first glance, simple rules proved to be quite difficult to follow. We are not lonely individuals, we need communication, meetings, constant interaction with each other. We can be unique and meaningful only among others. Isolation measures are often perceived by us not as protection, but as deprivation, encroachment, restriction in our social nature. Obviously that this crisis, like any other, offers hope that this pandemic will help humanity realize the dangers hidden in global disunity. The ability to help each other has always been valued and served as a measure of the humanity and civilization of society. American anthropologist Margaret Mead, examining the artifacts of primitive society during the lecture, asked the audience which of them was the first sign of civilization. The standard answers of the

students that it could be clay pots, hooks or processed stones were not correct. The correct answer was a broken femur, which then united. M. Mead considered it the first sign of civilization. The anthropologist explained her viewpoint as follows. If a living creature in the animal kingdom damages its paw, it dies. It will not be able to escape danger, get to the river to drink water or hunt for food with a broken paw. It becomes prey for predators because the bone union takes much time. Accordingly, a femur that was broken and then united is evidence that someone took the time to stay with the person who received the injury, bandaged the wounds, carried the person to safety, and guarded him until he recovered. Assisting another person during a difficult period is the act from which civilization begins (M. Mead, 1988). Mutual assistance in a pandemic is an important factor in maintaining mental health and mental balance.

The ability to assist each other becomes relevant not only in view of the risks and in view of dangers posed by the "crown viral society". First and foremost, the situation of the pandemic has exacerbated the troubles of public life that have become widespread and developed in recent decades. It is a matter of losing the sensitivity and ability of moral perception of other people to some extent, removing an ethical connection with others from the sphere of consciousness, not making full use of the emotional relationship with other people. More of a way, according to Z. Bauman and D. Donskis, they are not perceived as people with whom they would like to meet "face to face", to exchange views. Researchers describe this mood and behaviour of people with the term adiaphorization. They interpret this concept as certain actions and / or inactions in relation to certain categories of people beyond the axis of morality-immorality, that is, beyond the "universe of moral responsibilities" and beyond the sphere of phenomena subject to moral evaluation; tricks to declare such actions or inactions whether directly or indirectly as "morally neutral" and to avoid moral dishonour (so to speak, a fictional return to a state of heavenly innocence before the first bite of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil) (Z. Bauman, D. Donskis, 2014). This concept means indifference, equanimity, certain actions that are free from possible pangs of conscience. The risk of losing the mental ability to perceive what is happening in the world and sympathize with people who suffer is preconditioned by the dynamic pace of modern life, the rapid spread of technical and technological innovations, wars for ratings and media profits in the virtual space, and so on. Such human behaviour, according to Z. Bauman and D. Donskis, has serious consequences: instrumental rationality; mass society and mass culture, that is, a constant, instantaneous stay in the crowd (take at least television and the Internet);

polyphony of the inner "Self"; and such a worldview, as if you are always enveloped in an unknown force, thanks to which no one recognizes, identifies or disgraces you (Z. Bauman, D. Donskis, 2014). That way, things we do not associate with our lives become unimportant to us. Their existence is detached from our existence in the world. They do not belong to the sphere of our identity and self-esteem. When you constantly see plane crashes in movies, you start looking at them as a fiction that will never happen in real life. The violence that is demonstrated on a daily basis ceases to arouse surprise or disgust. As if it is becoming habitual. But at the same time it remains unrealistic that is it also seems that this cannot happen to us. It did not happen to you. That was someone else, some other people. These "others" are the invention of artists, analysts, scientists or journalists. The only real thing is what happens to us physically and directly, as researchers point out in fact (Z. Bauman, D. Donskis, 2014).

5. Development of moral and ethical values as an essential basis and a reliable mechanism for maintaining mental balance and health under the conditions of pandemic.

The moral and ethical values of trust and mutual assistance contribute to a person's ability to mutual tolerance and empathy in accepting the Other, cultivating spiritual flexibility and willingness to compromise, focusing upon understanding life values and priorities other than usual, recognising social equality, because all people are equally valuable. A person in interaction with another culture acquires new experience, new skills, abilities (Hanaba, Miroshnichenko, Shumovetska, Makohonchuk, Halimov, & Bloshchynskyi, 2019). However, we see an increase in conformism under conditions of psychological discomfort and pressure caused by panic, a number of stressful situations, anxiety and uncertainty. Views upon immigration, equality and sexual freedom are becoming more conservative, and tolerance as well as indulgence towards the Other are declining. Manifestations of selfishness, intolerance and even aggression are quite common in crisis and dangerous situations. Researchers express many different versions analysing this fact. As an example, the theory of behavioural immune system by M. Schaller. The basic idea of the theory is the statement that changes in social relations are provoked by reactions of the behavioural immune system. The researcher illustrates his reasoning by considering psychological reactions to the disease in the context of ancient history. Infectious diseases were one of the greatest threats to humanity in the morning of medicine. This contributed to the development of

unconscious psychological reactions. One of which is a reaction of disgust. In such a manner, we avoid things that smell bad or food that seems stale to us, and so on. We try to instinctively protect ourselves from infection in this way. Sometimes even the thought that we have swallowed something bad can turn the stomach inside out, instantly freeing the body from potential infection and any association which caused such a disgust, firmly etched in the memory, allowing us to avoid these things at all circumstances. The same goes for relationships between people. The researcher makes over-persuasion that the threat of catching the infection creates increased distrust and suspicion of other people, reduces the level of indulgence and tolerance, and so on. The person feels more vulnerable to infection; he treats the stranger more negatively (Robinson, 2020).

Therefore, the search for and delineation of strategies for maintaining mental health should be based upon the understanding that one or another technology cannot be the salvation means that eliminates imbalances and crisis manifestations of public life. The development of moral and ethical values can be an essential basis and a reliable mechanism for maintaining mental balance and health in general.

6. Conclusions

Humanization of social relations, new ethics is the guarantee and necessary condition for human survival under conditions of planetary instability and proneness to conflict caused by coronavirus infection. Its fundamental principles are humanism, freedom of choice, "morality of nonviolence", tolerance, renewal of social life through creating spiritual, responsible person, able to live and work in a world of constant change. In fact, spirituality outlines the ability of a person to go beyond individual existence, to have developed spiritual needs, to put one's own spiritual interests and values above material ones.

The person's spiritual sphere is not only closely interconnected with mental processes; it largely determines, produces and corrects them. It is obvious that cultivating a system of moral values and spiritual guidelines will help a person to overcome wear and tear of life, to maintain harmony with the world around him and with himself, to cultivate tolerance and flexibility in relations with other people, to focus upon adequate understanding of life problems, especially in the COVID-19 pandemic. The moral and ethical values of trust and mutual assistance contribute to a person's ability to mutual tolerance and empathy in accepting the Other, cultivating spiritual flexibility and willingness to compromise, focusing upon understanding life

values and priorities other than usual, recognising social equality, because all people are equally valuable.

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