

## **MODERN APPROACHES RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

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**Introduction.** In the last decade, in many countries, including the Republic of Armenia, in addition to the regular treatment, great significance has also been attached to the issues of restoring mental health and ensuring social integration, creating alternative services provided to people with mental health problems, and developing existing services. Social and psychological services for older people with mental health problems are provided by institutions of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health, as well as non-governmental organizations. And it is very important that the approach to determining the need for services and the standards for providing services are unified. Although significant progress has been made in the study of problems associated with the mental health of older people, much remains to be done to better understand these problems and find appropriate interventions, searching for forms and methods of providing them with appropriate psychological and social services.

It is well known that the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of mental processes change with age. The most socially significant changes are observed in the emotional sphere, personality traits and character. With the old age accentuated personality traits become sharper, the ability to empathize decreases, and the emotional sphere shifts to the area of negative emotions. Many years of experience and observation have shown that a significant number of people with mental health problems, after completing several courses of treatment, no longer need treatment, but only need care and adaptation in the society, development of self-care abilities and learning some basic skills that will allow them to live without outside help. However, people with mental health problems, having psychological and social problems are rarely ready to live independently.

**Methodology.** A number of studies have been conducted to determine the social, psychological and health services needs of older people with mental health problems. The studies were carried out using the Camberulian Needs Assessment Questionnaire (CANSAS), the Camberulian Needs Assessment Questionnaire modified for use in care institutions, the Psychopathological State Assessment Questionnaire and the Demographic Questionnaire adapted to the situation in Armenia. The studies were conducted in all institutions of the system of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (8 institutions) and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia (8 institutions) providing round-the-clock care and treatment of people with mental health disorders.

The research was carried out using a survey method with both older people with mental health problems and service personnel in social and medical institutions. Meetings and discussions were held with representatives of the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the RA Ministry of Health, as well as with public organizations providing social and psychological services to elderly people in need. According to this methodology, people with mental health problems who completed a needs assessment as a result of our study were divided into appropriate groups, which will enable better targeting of services provided. The research base also included statistical data, analysis of international-national (local) legal acts on this issue, and data from conducted research.

**Literature review.** Data from specialized literature indicate that mental disorders are detected in 40-70% of elderly and old people, but only one tenth of them are registered with psychiatric patients, i.e. the low appeal of these patients for psychiatric help leads to low detection of mental disorders in them. [Jacoby & Oppenheimer, 2001, 94-102], [Stewart - Hamilton, 2010, 203, 240]. This is due to the need to organize appropriate consultative, therapeutic and psychological assistance, the need to develop mental health services and bring assistance closer to the population, the need to develop new forms of it that go beyond the traditional specialized psychiatric service, the need to combine the efforts of psychiatrists and general medicine doctors, as well as psychologists and social workers [Tataryan, 2008, 1-3], that is, with the development of gerontopsychiatry, as one of the pressing problems of modern psychiatry, British scientists devoted their work to the need to take measures to improve living conditions and life expectancy of older people. [Jacoby & Oppenheimer, 2001, 94-102].

Older people are more likely to suffer from mental illness due to age, social status, health condition, loneliness, and other psychological complications. During a survey in the "Nork" general boarding house, almost all the residents surveyed noted that staying in a boarding house was associated with restrictions on their usual lifestyle, creating a painful feeling, difficult experiences due to the absence of a familiar environment and close people. And all this cannot but be important both in the deepening of intellectual disorders, disorders of cognitive processes, and behavior and the appearance of mental disorders at a later age [Tataryan, 2008, 1-3]. Not to mention the fact that general boarding homes often house and serve elderly people with mental health problems that were identified with age after their admission. In boarding houses and boarding houses of a general type there is no specialized psychiatric care, including medication. Based on this, it is advisable to consider the issue of creating special gerontopsychiatric departments at such institutions. In a survey of 420 elderly and senile people attending the day department of one of the Moscow social service centers, depressive spectrum disorders of a non-psychotic level of a periodic or constant nature were identified in 70.3%, which indicates a high prevalence of mental disorders of a non-psychotic level in late age. Active identify-

cation of such disorders will become possible as a result of the creation and functioning of such new out-of-hospital forms of gerontopsychiatric care as gerontopsychiatric, gerontological, geriatric offices in general somatic clinics and social service centers. [Polishchuk, 2018, 1-3]. Even a brief consideration and analysis of all the above data indicates the widespread prevalence of borderline mental disorders in late life and emphasizes their great medical and social significance.

In Armenia, some work has been done to create services adequate to the needs of people with mental health disorders and mental problems, in particular, boarding homes and day centers of various models, as well as strengthening dispensary control in the direction of training psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers. The first day center, the purpose of which was to provide psychological and social rehabilitation services to people with mental health problems for their socialization, was created in Armenia in 2000 by the Mental Health Foundation. The center was created taking into account international experience and different models and situational analyzes in Armenia. When organizing the day center a number of features were taken into account: therapeutic environment, rehabilitation (individual rehabilitation plan), accessibility, etc. This center became an exemplary model for Armenia, but was closed in 2010 due to lack of funding.

The goal of the mental health field as a whole is to keep people mentally healthy. This is reflected in the Concept for the provision of care services and alternative forms of social services for persons with mental health problems approved by RA Government from September 13, 2013 N 36 and the program of activities for the implementation of the Concept for 2013-2017. [The Concept, 2013, 3-15].

**Scientific novelty.** The existing system of services provided to older people with mental health problems cannot cover the full range of their socio-psychological needs and cannot ensure the targeting of such services. Based on this, there is a need to introduce new approaches to determining the need for certain services and, accordingly, introduce new service models. Assessing the individual capabilities and needs of older people with mental health problems using specially developed tools adapted to our situation, needs assessment questionnaires (CANSAS) can become a new approach in determining the need for services, developing standards for the provision of services, introducing new types of services and developing interdepartmental and intersectoral work.

**Analysis.** According to the state concept, the main problems of the sphere are that the issues of care and social services for the mentally ill and people with mental disorders are not fully regulated by law, the shortage of specialists in the field of mental health: psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, occupational therapist, social teacher, art therapist, etc., lack of specialized nursing homes or day centers for elderly people with mental disorders. The concept pays attention to such important issues as the need for round-the-clock and day hospital care for people with mental health problems, the elderly, as well

as children and adolescents with mental disabilities, the insufficient number of community day centers that meet the needs of people with mental problems, and limitations on the provision of services at home, restrictions on services for people with mental disorders in a temporary shelter for the homeless, etc., lack of accompanied housing for people with mental health problems, lack of employment and rehabilitation centers for adolescents and young people with mental health problems, etc.. Availability of the above problems indicates that families with a member with mental health problems are often left alone with their problems after the relative is discharged home from a psychiatric institution.

It should be noted that some of these issues have already been resolved. Thus, regulations have already lifted restrictions on the provision of services for people with mental health problems at home, and a corresponding department has been created in the home care service. There are examples of assisted living and new day centers. Relevant decisions have been made, including organizational ones, and a legal framework has been developed aimed at improving psycho-social assistance. However, issues that need to be resolved remain. This is a matter of personnel training: these are gerontopsychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers. This is an acute shortage of specialists both in psycho-neurological boarding homes and in psychiatric hospitals, especially if they are in remote areas of the republic. This is the introduction of modern approaches to the process of assessing and organizing the provision of services, interdepartmental interaction.

Back in 2016, the Armenian Psychiatric Association and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia developed a methodology for assessing persons with mental health problems in accordance with their physical and mental health condition, self-care ability, social skills and abilities, and, accordingly, a methodology for determining groups of persons who need certain living conditions, services and care. [Sukiasyan et al., 2018, 5-16]. The study was conducted using the following tools adapted to our situation:

- 1) Camberley Needs Assessment Questionnaire (CANSAS);
- 2) Short Camberulian Needs Assessment Questionnaire (CANSAS) (modified for use in residential care settings);
- 3) Psychopathological State Assessment Questionnaire; 4) Demographic questionnaire.

The Camberulian Needs Assessment Short (Modified) Questionnaire (CANSAS) includes the following questions: about accommodation (are you satisfied with the living conditions), food (can you prepare food), housekeeping, taking care of yourself, day-time activities, physical health, Psychotic symptoms, health problem and treatment information, psychological depression, safety for yourself, safety for others, alcohol or drug use, child care, education (reading, writing, comprehension, and arithmetic difficulties), using a speech therapist, using transportation, spending money, and more.

The study also used a supplemental questionnaire to the Camberul Short Questionnaire for Needs Assessment, which provides a detailed understanding of a person's needs. For example, housekeeping was determined by the following questions:

Are you able to do household work?

Someone is helping you

- It becomes difficult to take care of the apartment [if 0 (yes) or 9 (no/not known) there is no need to continue];

- What kind of help does he/she get from his relatives or friends in taking care of the apartment?

- What support does the local services office provide in housekeeping?

- What support does he/she need from local services in housekeeping?

- Beneficiary's opinion about the services.

A mental health assessment chart was also developed. Necessary blank data has been filled.

The use of these tools was carried out by persons with appropriate professional education who passed an initial short course.

Based on the developed methodology, an assessment of the needs and abilities of people with mental health problems registered for admission to care facilities and care facilities was carried out.

With the mentioned methodology and tools, an interview was conducted with 1010 beneficiaries and caregivers in all institutions providing round-the-clock care in the republic:

- Vardenis neuropsychological boarding house
- Sevan psychiatric hospital
- Regional neuropsychiatric dispensary of Syunik
- "Nork" psychiatric center
- "Avan" mental health center
- Nor Kharberd specialized orphanage
- "Nubarashen" psychiatric center
- Armash health center named after Hayrikyan
- Gyumri Mental Health Center
- Lori regional neuropsychiatric dispensary
- Vardashen shelter for homeless people
- Nork boarding house
- Gyumri boarding house
- Boarding house number 1 of Yerevan

The research was carried out using a survey method with both older people with mental health problems and service personnel in social and medical institutions. Meetings and discussions were held with representatives of the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the RA Ministry of Health, as well as with public organizations providing social and psychological services to elderly people in need.

According to this methodology, people with mental health problems who completed a needs assessment as a result of the above study are divided into the following five groups:

1) Beneficiaries included in the first group do not have (at the time of the survey) troubling mental health problems, do not pose a danger to themselves or others, have sufficient social skills for independent living and can receive services in supported / accompanied housing or care houses for up to 8 people, where observation by a local/district psychiatrist will be organized, both for people with mental disorders living in their own homes, and the services of a social assistant/case manager will be provided in solving everyday problems;

2) Beneficiaries receive services in supported housing/accompanied living or care houses for 8-16 people;

3) Beneficiaries who require 24-hour supervision/care but remain independent and who can still receive services in a care facility. Beneficiaries included in this group, in case of consistent and persistent social and psychological rehabilitation, can be transferred to the second group;

4) Beneficiaries require constant intensive care and can continue to receive services in this institution;

5) Beneficiaries included in group 5 need active treatment and clarification of the diagnosis, despite the fact that they have been previously assessed. Only after this it will be possible to assess their true needs and the necessary conditions for receiving services.

According to the results of the conducted studies:

- 752 people (73%) need to receive care in existing institutions;

- 216 people (21%) can live in round-the-clock care homes designed for 3-16 people in terms of their mental, physical condition and maintenance of household skills and have a great potential to integrate into society to lead an independent life in the future.

A study conducted using this method in the Vardenis neuropsychological boarding house, the center for helping people with mental disorders "Dzorak" and specialized orphanages (Kharberd and Izmirlyan) showed that 14 people (group 1) can live in supported/accompanied housing, 25 people (group 2) can live in care homes for 8-16 people or receive care in small homes with 24-hour supervision.

For beneficiaries who, according to the evaluation criteria, can receive services in Vardenis, it is advisable to separate those with mental and psychiatric problems and also those with more severe problems from those with milder ones.

As a result of an assessment of the needs of 1316 dependents conducted in 24-hour care facilities in 2022 [Study of the need for social services among elderly citizens of Armenia, 2016], it was founded that:

- 25.4% or 334 people in their current state can already receive services outside institutions,
- 49% or 641 people need round-the-clock supervision/care, but at the same time they maintain their independence and can continue to receive services in a care facility, and in case of consistent rehabilitation work, they can be transferred to their facility,
- 22% or 291 people need constant intensive care,
- 4% or 48 people need active treatment.

A study on the results of the transformation of social services, mental health services, in which large psychiatric institutions are gradually replaced by alternative services, such as short-term care homes, community day care centers and other services, showed a positive dynamic. And this is not only the development of social skills, serious steps towards socialization, this, which is very important, served to strengthen family ties.

The best examples of such centers in Armenia are the community house in Spitak, where 16 people with mental health problems live, and the group houses of the "Jermik Ankyun" foundation, the number of which has already reached 3, and the number of residents - 30.

All surveys conducted show that beneficiaries in psychoneurological boarding homes and psychiatric clinics in most cases receive services that do not meet their needs and capabilities.

In order to target persons with mental health problems to the appropriate organizations providing them with psychological and social services (both public and non-governmental sectors), it is necessary to continue to develop methods for providing assistance and social services to people with mental disorders in accordance with their diagnoses, severity of the disease, retained abilities and general condition, it is necessary to continue the work to ensure the targeting of the services provided, it is necessary to create a system of dynamic mapping of such services.

International documents and recommendations indicate that the most effective care for mental illness is comprehensive, based on a holistic, "biopsychosocial-cultural" approach to assessment, treatment and care of the patient, provided by competent, knowledgeable professionals, supported by appropriate informed members of families and communities, is flexible, tailored to individual needs, responsive to them (for example, provided in

culturally appropriate ways in the home or other appropriate settings), and delivered by a multidisciplinary team. [UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2008, 93-105].

**Conclusions.** It is expedient to carry out a complex geriatric and gerontological assessment of an elderly person using the principles and approaches of the International Classification of Functioning and Health (ICF, adopted by WHO in 2001). The result of such an interdisciplinary diagnostic process for determining functionality, as one of the main determinants, can be the development of a complex of medical, psychological and social measures, the creation of a coordinated action plan aimed at long-term support of an elderly person, providing him/her with the necessary targeted services, and adapting the social service system for elderly people.

Currently, deinstitutionalization is an important stage in the transformation of social services and mental health services, in which large psychiatric institutions are gradually replaced by alternative services such as short-term care homes, community day centers and other services.

One of the new effective forms of adaptation to independent living can be considered assisted living. The best examples of such centers in Armenia are a community home in Spitak, where 16 people with mental health problems live, and group homes of the Jer-muk Ankyun Foundation, the number of which has already reached 3, and number of residents 30.

Organizing a biopsychosocial assessment of the condition of people with mental health problems and providing them with targeted, high-quality services requires, first of all, the availability of professional personnel. This requires intersectoral work on training and re-training of personnel: psychologists, psychiatrists, geriatric psychiatrists, social workers and other specialists.

As part of the provision of comprehensive social services, it is necessary to support family members of people with mental disorders in obtaining free psychological, social, legal and counseling assistance. Increasing family intensity can have a positive impact on their socialization.

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**Modern approaches related to the management of socio-psychological services**

*Key words: older people with mental health problems, gerontopsychology, mental problems, social and psychological services, alternative forms of service*

The article discusses measures aimed at improving management processes in the provision of social and psychological services to people with mental health problems, as well as measures necessary to improve the social and psychological state and stabilize the mental condition of people with mental health problems. The emphasis is mainly on organizing this process, on issues of a comprehensive assessment of the needs and capabilities of this group of people and providing them with targeted measures and social services, adequate to their capabilities, aimed at developing their social activity. Attention is paid to the issues of psychological and social adaptation of older people, which is currently relevant for the entire society, and its solution is mainly the strategic task of gerontopsychology. The current state of the system of mental health and social protection services is presented from the point of view of the need to create alternative forms of services. Based on advanced international experience and work carried out in Armenia, the article pays attention to the importance and necessity of introducing and developing new forms and types of psychological and medical-social assistance to people with mental health problems. Data from studies both conducted by the author and those conducted on his initiative are presented. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made on the measures necessary to improve the social and psychological state of people with mental health problems.