Ukraine, a new independent country of the former Soviet Union, is going through a complicated period of transition to new values, a new economy system, and a new socio-political system. Many of the habitual ideas and conceptions about human relations, self-esteem, self-responsibility and responsibility for one’s family and children are collapsing or evolving. Workplace relationships are changing. People’s attitudes are evolving, be it towards power, law and property, or towards their own selves, death, gender equality, family, and children. All of these processes reflect the deep economic, ecological (Chernobyl disaster), socio-political and psychological crises in the society.

It is important to understand how the totalitarian regime has affected the people who lived in the former Soviet Union and East European countries, how these people construct their world differently from Western citizens as they seek to create new psychological models.

Women have some specific social and psychological problems in post-totalitarian society in the context of gender sensitivity and equality, and the violence against women.
The problem of violence against women is a new one for the post-communist societies. Any accident inside a family was kept secret during the Soviet era. Stalin’s social health paradigm, the absence of sex in the socialist society, the intolerance of the Communist party towards divorce, the violence model as a normal mechanism of social decision-making were the background of the human rights transformation in the communist society.

We studied the psychological situation associated with violence against women in society during the transition period, the influence of the communist regime on the women’s self-esteem, the situation of women’s responsibility for the family life, their position as violence victims, their participation in political life, etc.

Analysts of the human being in the post-Soviet period identified several common psychological constructs:
- paternalism,
- collective thinking,
- dependency on authorities,
- gender insensitivity,
- violent consciousness.

We consider that it is important not only to investigate and grasp the ethics of totalitarian regimes, but also to remember that the psychological model of “Soviet” people remains today in the post-totalitarian societies of Eastern Europe and the new independent countries of the former Soviet Union.

The Ukrainian family has a long and very specific psychohistory. The nuclear families formed in Ukraine in the nineteenth century. The young families usually had their own house and owned some land. But in Ukraine parents never lost the help of children in their old age. Usually, one son lived with his parents: on the left bank of the Dnieper it was the youngest son, on the right bank, the oldest. If a family had no sons, this role was played by a daughter. It was usual for Ukrainians to have agreements between parents and son (or daughter) where taking care of the parents for the rest of their days led to inheriting their property.

The nineteenth-century Ukrainian family was patriarchal. All family members were dependent on the head (usually the father) who managed the family property. Ukrainian legislation did not provide that only one person could order the family property. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Ukrainian family moved on to the process of democratization and nuclearization of the family relationships. On the west bank of the Dnieper
and in southern Ukraine the family property was divided almost equally between the family members, including not only sons but also daughters. On the east bank, the situation was more close to Lithuanian family status – women had some rights for family property, subject however to many conditions and limitations (Ponomarjov, 1993).

In fact, women in Ukrainian families had more equal rights and status compared, for instance, with Russian families. For example, women (wives or daughters), as equal family members, had rights to family property, dowry, etc. The relationships in Ukrainian families were usually concordant. Quite often a woman would be the head of the family.

The only reasons for divorce considered by the community were the incapacity to bear children or serious sickness. So there were very few divorces in Ukrainian families in the beginning of the twentieth century – about 0.5 per 1,000 marriages (Ponomarjov, 1993). The socio-economic relations were based on the strength of the family. “Economy is a background of the family,” as went the saying in Ukraine.

In Russia, during that period, there was always a gross gender inequality inside the family.

Traditionally, the Russian woman was the slave of her man. Among the peasantry a daughter was expected to be obedient to her father until he married her off, whereupon she was required to submit to the will of her husband. The husband became her “father” within the patriarchal peasant culture. Among the gentry the situation was not very different (Rancour-Laferrier, 1993).

Gender equality was not usual in the Russian family. It was normal for a husband to beat his wife and children. Among the Russian peasantry the father’s abuse of the mother would often take place right in front of the children. Within the traditional peasant family the father was a harsh disciplinarian who had the right to decide whom his children would marry, where they would live, etc. (Rancour-Laferrier, 1993).

It is possible to imagine the influence the Russian Empire had on family traditions in Ukraine, but as we know, the family is the social system where the psychohistorical structures gather the necessary conditions for safety and survival.

The Ukrainian peasant family kept many of its traditions, especially, in the beginning of the twentieth century, the tradition of respecting the mother as the Bereginia (protecting person) of the family house and traditions.
From the inception of the Soviet regime, Bolsheviks considered the family as one of the main objects for attack. New legislation about civil marriage and divorce was adopted. A new ideology for family and children upbringing was created. Bolshevik ideologist Peter Stuchka wrote, “the family is a form of slavery” (Geller, 1994). In the *Small Soviet Encyclopaedia* (1930), it was written that very soon the family would die together with private property and state.

Of deep influence to the family structure and gender relationships was the Bolsheviks’ approach to the personality from a social-lineage point of view. According to this view, if one’s lineage is proletarian, one has all social rights and can rely on state structures. If one’s lineage is bourgeois, one is the potential enemy of the society and cannot have the same rights as other members of society. A bourgeois lineage closed the doors to the universities and careers. Communist propaganda supported all cases of family treachery. The infamous Pavlik Morozov became a Soviet national hero because he betrayed his father and gave the Bolshevik administration information about where his family stored their grain.

This approach raised big conflicts inside families and deep psychological issues for most people. It was a time of arousal for many new psychological models. Among these, the double moral and the compromise between the Good and Evil were predominant. It was usual to use such imperatives as “the aim justifies the means” (Stalin), “if the enemy does not give in, he needs to be annihilated” (Maxim Gorky), “if someone fells a forest, slivers will fly” (Stalin).

Fear and Lie became the general managers of human behaviour. Parents were afraid to tell their own children about their lineage. The social relay system was interrupted.

The family as a social structure was destroyed. In 1934 there were 37 divorces per 100 marriages. In Moscow hospitals, 57,000 childbirths versus 154,000 abortions were registered. The birth rate was very low. Many orphans lived in special child houses or right on the streets (Hosking, 1994). The issue was not only about the family destroying politics but also about the process of collectivization, mass repression, and artificial famine.

A so-called new moral emerged. In the 1920s, people were immersed in immoral propaganda and discussions about family, sexual freedom, and the struggle with the old way of life. In *The Revolution and the Youth*, Professor A. Zalkind developed the theory of the special proletarian morals. He wrote: “The old morals are dead, decomposed, stagnant. The new state class is moving to the proscenium. It will develop its own special rules of behaviour, its own ethics.” (Zalkind, 1924).
In the first step of this move against family, Bolsheviks were oriented towards women (freedom from family slavery) and youths; in the second step, the main orientation was on youths. Robert Konkvest considered that Stalin had the conscious aim to destroy family relationships. The hatred for class enemies, the fear, the lies and the denunciations became the base of new morals. The state education system formed new people who were the instruments of family destruction. One of the slogans of this time was: “When we destroy the family hearth, we will strike the last blow to the bourgeois system” (Geller, 1994).

This process of family destruction was finished towards the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. It was new era for Stalin’s authoritarian regime.

The Communist Party began to understand that it was time for a change in family politics. In 1934-1935, the mass media initiated a campaign aimed at strengthening family values. So-called “free love” was presented as a result of bourgeois influence. A new Soviet moral emerged, more severe than Puritan morals of Victorian England. New laws limited the freedom of divorce and abortion. A new totalitarian model of the family was created. We can agree with Erich Fromm and Wilhelm Reich that a totalitarian state needs a totalitarian family as a social institution. This thesis was very clear for Stalin and his entourage. They organized an all-out campaign to spread the totalitarian Puritan family model.

The absence of information on sexuality, plus the Puritan model of the family, plus whole families living in a single room resulted in sexual inhibition of the personality. “Sexual inhibition makes up the base both for the individual’s family reserve and self-consciousness” (Reich, 1997).

The lack of necessary information about sexuality or contraceptives, as well as the emergence of Puritan family morals as the main social model of the family resulted in the situation that marriage, in a sexual context, became some sort of secret activity associated with a constant fear of pregnancy. Girls, as a rule, got married without having the faintest idea about sexual relations, but with the same feelings as women had had in Euripides’ time in Ancient Greece: “Then, when she goes into her husband’s home […] she needs a prophet’s skill to sort out the man whose bed she shares,” said Medea in a famous Euripides tragedy. In fact, Soviet women in Stalin’s time lived the same situation.

The gender equality announced by communist ideologists in the first stages of the Soviet society development was liquidated. Women had this strange position in Soviet Union where they did the hardest work in society,
managed all problems inside the family, did all the house chores and managed the upbringing of children, while having no influence whatsoever on society’s social life.

Such was the whole picture of ordinary Soviet woman life: “Food shortages; eternal queues; indifferent doctors hastily attending children who constantly get ill from sloppily run nursery schools; a dearth of the most basic household implements or services; passive husbands buried in TV or newspapers who never lift a finger to help out” (Du Plessix Gray, 1990).

On the psychological side, in Soviet families woman became the main figure. Many Soviet families lost men at the time of Stalin’s repressions and at World War II. Then emerged a new generation of women who had to reach out, to demand, to obtain something so that their family could survive. A new psychological type of woman with a powerful, decisive, forceful, and dictatorial personality emerged. There was a family head coping the totalitarian state dictator. The situation was unbelievable: these women, as usual, loved the Main Man – State, believed in Him and carried out His will (Bejin, 1992).

The family as a whole adopted the Soviet way of life: mothers gave orders and punishments; they were capricious and lapsed into hysterics. The father (if any) kept silent. The children believed that this was the true family model: mothers work very hard inside and outside the family, they solve all family problems, they manage all the family money and are the family dictators.

At the same time men possessed all power in the society. There was no place for women on the top level of power. This gave rise to an antifeminine model of society. There were some women in the Soviet Parliament and in the government, but in fact, there were no women who made social, political or economical decisions.

Ukrainian families suffered from Soviet power even more than others. Not only Ukraine lost about 6 million people at the time of the 1933 famine, but it also lost the main psychohistorical conditions of its family lifestyle and children upbringing. The next tragedy was the fascist occupation in 1941-1944. Ukraine lost millions and millions of people, mostly men. After World War II Stalin began new repressions against the Ukrainians and Jews, and deported many people from West Ukraine.

In this context, we consider it is especially important not only to investigate and grasp the ethics of totalitarian regimes, but also to remember that the “Soviet” psychological model remains to this day in post-totalitarian societies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.
We conducted a psychologically and psychohistorically focused research project to grasp the nature of the current psychological constructs and to assess the social and psychological consequences of the Soviet totalitarian regime on people. To identify these psychological constructs we observed the relationship of a group of people to a list of key factors, and also applied cross-cultural and psychohistorical analysis methods to the psychosocial situation in the former Soviet Union.

To represent our results we used the concept of the psychological model. In this context, the psychological models are the cognitive, emotional and ethic-religious constructs which determine the person’s behaviour and appear as the result of the influence of family, education, and social peculiarities on the person. Here we also can observe the system of a person’s attitudes – towards oneself, family, children, violence, power, work, etc. We also studied the general values and other psychological consequences of the Stalinian concept that the person is but a small part of the big social machine.

In the context of the violence against persons, especially against women, we can see that in the area of personal responsibility, the “Soviet” citizen was culturally trained in learned helplessness and dependency. The State oversaw the planning, organizing and implementing of all facets of each individual’s life. Some persons in the political hierarchy determined which apartment a person would receive and when, the metric allotment for each person (in Moscow it was 9 m²/person while in Kiev it was 13.5 m²/person), the time and manner of vacation leave and which doctor and clinic to visit.

The “Soviet” citizen could be employed only at one organization. There was no choice for another profession and no opportunities to work overtime in order to earn more money. This situation created a patronymic system that functioned like a family. Indeed, this system was designed to destroy the nuclear family and replace it with a collective “family.” Consequently, people believed that it was someone else’s responsibility to solve the problems of each individual and family, which created a lack of response.

In this context, it is important to study how people in post-communist countries understand what is violence, gender equality, or gender-based violence.

Now, in the era of post-Soviet society transformation, it is important to fully understand the inner psychological constructs, the psychological models of post-Soviet human behaviour, the differences between personal constructs in democratic and totalitarian societies, especially in the context of gender equality and violence against women.
OBJECTIVE

The objective of our research and practical work was to study the psychological-behaviour models of domestic violence victims and violators in the Ukrainian post-totalitarian society, to develop technologies to cope domestic violence by psychological consulting, training and supporting of women who are victims of violence in a social and legal context.

The primary goal of our research was to identify the typical psychosocial constructs of people who lived under the communist totalitarian regime. We were interested in the psychological constructs of women’s position in the society, inside the family and in the workplace.

The secondary goal of our research was to study how the different strata of Ukrainian society understand what violence, especially violence against women, really is.

The third goal of our research and psychological practice was to use our results as a foundation for helping women in this region to build new psychological models oriented towards gender equality, creating a work and family life balance, overcoming sexual harassment and discrimination towards women in the workplace and promoting the active participation of women in the political and social life. In the context of gender equality and human rights, we were also interested in the relations between post-Soviet women unpretentiousness, low self-esteem, willingness to accept bad work and living conditions and real misbalance between work and family.

METHODS

In the first stage of our research we used the methods of cross-cultural psychohistorical analysis of family traditions in Ukraine in the context of woman’s status and violence against women. The main directions of the psychological modeling were:

- cognitive,
- emotional,
- ethical-religious,
- pattern per se (the system of attitudes and values).

Within the cognitive level of psychological modeling we considered three sublevels of analysis:

- the psychohistorical sublevel,
- the informational sublevel,
- the cognitive per se sublevel.
On the *psychohistorical sublevel* we analyzed the influence of the persons’ past experience of the society on their psychological constructs and behaviour. We also considered the social models of the past, present and future, and the psychosocial models of the individual, the family, and the small group.

On the *informational sublevel* we analyzed the main directions of the Soviet totalitarian information space function. We performed a psychological analysis of the societal information space in the various periods of the communist regime and the information space of the individual, family, and small groups. We did a cross-cultural analysis of the designed society information space and the information space in communist and post-communist societies. We also considered the information base of the person and family’s inner exile in communist society.

The *cognitive per se sublevel* is important. Stalin’s paradigm that a person is but a small part of the big social machine resulted in a special approach to the communist education and family upbringing systems. For example, in these systems no attention was paid to developing the person’s strategic thinking. The totalitarian communist society, as we supposed, had a direct influence on such human cognitive structures as strategic and tactical thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, planning, and judgment.

On the *emotional level*, we considered three directions: the persons’ needs; their feelings; their psychical state. We supposed that the communist regime exerted a strong pressure on the development of human needs and feelings. We were also interested in the correlation between the domination of each person’s feelings and the psychical state of people and the society as the whole.

On the *ethical-religious level* of psychological modeling, we considered two sublevels: spiritual and comparative. The communist ideology, as has been shown, invaded the deepest spiritual structures of the person. It is important to analyze how deep and constant this intervention was. The conceptions of God, life and death, good and evil were subjects of communist propaganda. It is important to understand how families and people adopted the communist ethics system, what models of behaviour created communist slogans such as “The goal justifies the means” or “We have to obtain such result at any cost.”

On the *pattern-per-se modeling level*, we consider the main person’s attitudes that define his or her beliefs and behaviour.
We divide these attitudes as follows:

– attitudes towards life and death in general;
– attitudes towards one’s own life and state of health;
– attitudes towards personal safety;
– social attitudes:
  • towards power (governmental structures),
  • towards the law,
  • towards the family,
  • towards work,
  • towards violence,
  • towards survival conceptions and skills (“I am a victim” or “I am a survivor”).

In the second stage of our research, we tried to find out to what degree the population’s views on domestic violence coincided with the global understanding of this phenomenon.

Our research was conducted in two parts: first the constitution of an expert group, then a survey of the population.

Nine persons who, in some ways, have to deal with violence against women or domestic violence as a whole were invited to work in the expert group. They either contribute to the prevention of violence or help the victims, or work on legislative changes in Ukraine. Among the experts were representatives of both public and private organizations.

Social surveys were conducted in two main directions:

– youths from the upper class (boys and girls aged 14-17, students in and around Kiev);
– the adult population (women and men from Kiev, Mykolaiv, Lviv, Uzhhorod and Pervomaisk – 145 people in all).

This part of the research was realized in collaboration with Katerina Babenko. We developed a psychological help program aimed at domestic violence victims in a post-totalitarian society, including individual counselling, psychological work with groups of victims, training, developing and publishing fliers, booklets and brochures, working on radio and TV, and answering women’s questions in popular magazines and newspapers.

We offered counselling to over 150 women who had been victims of domestic violence. We conducted ten training sessions for 120 women and five programs for women’s groups.
RESULTS

As for the first goal of our research, our analysis on the cognitive level gave the following results. On the psychohistorical sublevel, we could see the influence of the past experience of society and the social models of the past, present and future within the family, the educational system and the social thinking on the individual’s inner life and behaviour. We discussed the consequences of the Soviet power’s activity on the life of families, children, and women themselves.

Women still consider it their duty to take care of the whole family life and its secret character, and to constantly show patience when confronted with violent actions from their husbands.

On the informative sublevel of analysis, we could see how the communist power organized the information space. Many cultural treasures were removed from local museums and from the view of the people. The information space was strongly defined for people. Each radio receiver was registered by NKVD (later KGB) in Stalin’s time. Later, under Khrushchev and Brejnev, the politics of rigid control of the information space continued in an other, somewhat lighter form.

As for the violence against persons, including women, there was no mention of it in the Soviet information space and for some time in the post-Soviet world. “No information – no problem!”

On the cognitive per se level, the communist educational system fulfilled its mandate. The main task of this educational machine was to develop certain people’s mental structures so as to make them helpful in the military enterprises on a middle decision level. This educational system was very far from developing the person’s free thinking, strategic thinking, and decision-making skills. Paternalism was one of the main features of the ordinary person under the Soviet regime.

In the whole, on the cognitive level of our model, we observed that the cognitive space of Soviet personality had the following characteristics:

- limited information space;
- lack of freedom;
- fear as a constant emotional life manager;
- lies as a means of survival;
- lack of strategic thinking;
- lack of the planning skills that are so necessary to a person. At the same time an informational pressure was exerted on the person with the slogan: “We are living in a planning society”;
– lack of responsible relations between time and the person’s actions;
– an attack on the national languages and traditions, destroying the inner harmony acquired by the person through the unification of the national mental/emotional space and nature conditions.

In this context, we could identify that under the Soviet regime, the person was submitted to a system of psychological barriers. This system had a large influence on society in a time of social, psychological, political and economic transition.

The main cognitive psychological barriers to which people in the post-Soviet era are submitted are:
– strategic barriers,
– planning barriers,
– barriers related to the negative image of market activity,
– the barrier of unpretentiousness (as to life quality).

This last barrier is one of the reasons why many women had a lot of patience towards violence exerted against them. Women thought that being a victim was the norm. As the main manager of the family life, the wife and mother was ready to patiently endure her husband’s alcoholism and his violent behaviour in both a physical and psychological sense.

The communist regime established a balance between people’s small needs, small salaries and small quantities of goods in stores. Ukraine under the Soviet regime was the object of special attention from the Soviet power, which implemented a strategy to move all Ukrainian talents and active persons to a central zone of active thinking and uplifting life – namely, Moscow. During the Soviet period, not only Ukraine lost millions of citizens to artificial famine, collectivization, and World War II, but it also systematically lost her most active people, who left to work in the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in the government, and in various scientific institutes and military enterprises in Russia. Many Ukrainians were hired to extract Siberia’s oil and still work there to this day.

As for the second goal of our research, we studied the attitudes of the Ukrainian population towards the violence against women on the base of the system of women’s and men’s psychological behaviour models in post-Soviet families, and we analyzed the typical situations of domestic violence within families as well as related social and legal issues. We published over 30 fliers, brochures and booklets to inform people about human rights, prevention and coping with domestic violence.
Domestic violence against women is a somewhat new notion in Ukraine. Many international documents are now being translated and published where domestic violence against women is denoted as one of the main types of violence. To understand how exactly people interpret the notion of “domestic violence,” we included in our survey a direct question: “What forms of conduct do you consider to be domestic violence?”

Let’s look at our respondents’ answers to this question. They were given a list of types of violent conduct which are considered as violence in the international conventions and declarations. As can be seen in Figure 1, beating and other types of physical violence hold the first place (98%). Among the types of psychological violence, stressing the shortcomings is the most commonly cited (91%). As for types of mental violence such as economic control, restriction of choice and indifference, one out of three respondents did not consider them at all as cases of domestic violence. This is the opinion of the adult population.

Figure 1
Types of Conduct Regarded as Violence (%)

Figure 2 shows that beating and the use of physical force are seen as a form of domestic violence by 63% of the respondents, forced sexual intercourse by 35%, restrictions by 29%, yelling and cursing by 28%, and humiliation by 23%. Only 9% of the respondents consider economic and mental control and indifference as forms of domestic violence.
It turns out that teenagers separate physical and mental violence even more than adults do. About two teens out of three boys and girls do not consider cursing and indifference as forms of violence. About a third of them do not see continuous humiliation, communication restrictions, compulsion, or economic control as forms of violence.

Even more interesting is the wide gap between teenage boys and girls as regards their understanding of violence. This gap is most noticeable in perceptions about psychological violence (Figure 3).

The results of our research show the existence of traditional stereotypes about the role of wife and husband in the family and society. These stereotypes are common not only among the adult population, but among the teenagers as well. One of such stereotypes is that “the only role and task of the wife is taking care of the house, husband and children.” Thus a woman should not think about a career, professional development or self-realization. As can be seen in Figure 3, 70.2% of boys think that a woman’s main roles are those of “hostess” and “mother.” They think that taking care of the house and children upbringing is a job for a woman, not a man. Among teenager respondents, 56.7% of the boys think that a woman with a career cannot be a good mother and wife. In the same group, 76.1% of boys see the husband as the head of the family, having the right to control the family life. Girls have another point of view (Figure 4).
Figure 3
Comparison of Perceptions of Violence by Boys and Girls (%)

Figure 4
Comparison of Girls’ and Boys’ Attitudes towards the Roles of Woman and Man
Major changes have occurred as regards violence against women in recent times. Three main tendencies may be observed:

- Many men now work in business structures and earn good money. Many of them begin to realize their pain, fear and anger against women, especially their mother (recall the family situation in the totalitarian context after World War II). These men are applying a new system of violence in their family, turning it against their wives and children. In these families, the level of violence against women is very high. These men are applying violent behaviour models against women in their offices too.

- There is a high level of violence against women and girls within poor families. Man as husband and father blames the women in his family for all his personal and family problems. As will be seen below, these conditions are one of the main reasons which draw women and girls into the human-trafficking networks.

- The society is beginning to understand the importance of protecting and supporting victims of domestic violence.

Ukraine was the first country of the former Soviet Union to enact a law on the prevention of violence inside family. Unfortunately, this act is mostly declarative. Members of Ukrainian Parliament, with the cooperation of NGOs and some state structures, are in the process of amending and implementing the Act.

As for human trafficking, some results of our research show that violence in the family is one of the main reasons why women get caught in the human-trafficking net. It turns out that a woman in this family context loses what little dignity she may have had in her childhood and is stigmatized as “ignoramus,” “lazybones,” or “no-gooder.”

The victims of domestic violence are easily deceived. They are ready to run away from such a family and believe in any fairytale.

The stigmas and negative psychological characteristics girls and women suffer in their families promote the victims’ trust and dreams about life in paradise (Figure 5).

Girls who are victims of domestic violence become also victims in the school. This is where the person’s self-stigmatization is developing: “I am an ignoramus”; “I am the worst”; “I am a good-for-nothing.”

There is also stigmatization by relatives: “You’re a bad girl”; “You’re good for nothing”; “You only bring problems”; “You’re foolish.”
Figure 5
The Development of Stigmatization in a Girl Who Is a Victim of Family Violence
In the post-totalitarian patriarchal family, parents consider their daughter as their possession. They may let her down, lose their temper and evaluate her on her marks at school or the quality of the work she performs for her mother or father. When a daughter’s achievements do not fit her parents’ requirements, when her school report does not show the minimum mark defined by one of the parents, she may be punished, let down, etc. Step by step, the girl acquires the stigmas of “good-for-nothing,” “not talented,” “loser,” etc.

As a result of psychological (and very often physical) violence, low self-esteem is being shaped and the process of self-stigmatization unfolds.

Girls are deprived of responsibility for their own life and even for their documents. Such victims of psychological violence are ready either to give away their documents to any human dealer who will appear as a kind of “father” who can protect their rights.

According to the data of our social survey of the population and the results of the work of our expert group, focus groups and thorough interviews, we can identify certain types of families whose members are more prone to get trapped into the nets of slavery: 1) patriarchal, totalitarian families; 2) dysfunctional families; 3) families in a critical situation.

Members of such families feel that there is no way out and, as is traditional in the Soviet mentality, they try to find a culprit. The stigmas emerge in the search of the scapegoat.

*The patriarchal, totalitarian family.* In such a family, children must always obey their parents. The parents know best where their daughter must study, what she must eat, whom she must date and where she must work. The motto of this style of upbringing is “you are good for nothing without me.” Such conditions give shape to a stigma which defines the child’s behaviour in his or her future life.

For example, in one family (Donetsk) a girl was an excellent pupil who wanted to pursue her studies. But her parents didn’t allow her to continue studying and made her work as a charwoman in the prestigious firm where her mother worked. Moreover, they gave her no pocket money and did not let her see her friends, arguing that she would not survive alone and could not achieve anything, that she was a good-for-nothing. Thus the stigma “You are a good-for-nothing!” was formed.

*The dysfunctional family.* In such a family, at least one of the parents is functionally disabled, very often by an addiction to drugs or alcohol. Children in such a family are deprived of attention and love, and severely punished.
A typical situation: a girl (in Donetsk) was forced to drink with her parents, who called her a whore, threatened to drive her out and insisted that she could not survive without them. In such a family, the needs and interests of the child are not satisfied. The relationships are cruel and stigmatized. Very often the children suffer from cruelty, violence, or totalitarian behaviour; they must obey every whim of their parents for fear of being beaten or called a good-for-nothing.

Figure 5 (idea by Olga Kurilenko) shows the development and movement of a girl’s stigmas during her upbringing in a violent family.

As for third goal of our research, we consulted more than 150 women who had been victims of domestic violence. We created the “Job Club” training program to help women attain economic independence. We realized 10 training sessions for 120 women. Over 50% of the Job Club Program trainees found a job.

Ukraine is moving towards preventing and overcoming violence against women. Here is the current situation:

– There are only four shelters for victims in all of Ukraine: one in the capital, administrated by the Kiev Center for Women, has a capacity of 15 persons; another one in Kharkiv, run by a NGO; one in the region of Kiev; one in West Ukraine.

– There is no social housing. Many abused women refrain from leaving their offender by fear of homelessness.

– There is a need to substantially increase the cooperation between medical, social and legal authorities. Too many victims find out that in fact, cooperation does not exist.

– The NGO ROZRADA and the Fund for protection of victims of violence organize rehabilitation services for abused women in the Kiev Center for Women. Some 300 to 400 victims receive help every year through the center, including vocational training in order to attain functional independence.

– There is no rehabilitation program for perpetrators in Ukraine.

– There are no possibilities to stop violence. NGOs and the ministry of Family, Youth and Sport understand the importance of the development and implementation of Stop Violence national program. We hope for success in this direction.
CONCLUSION

People who live in the new independent countries of the former Soviet Union have both a common and particular psychohistory. The present generations in these countries live with psychological behaviour models and family values that were formed in a totalitarian society. Family in this society was the object of much attention from the Soviet ideology and propaganda.

Women in the Soviet and post-Soviet society are very often victims of domestic violence. In the Soviet information space there was no information on human rights (the UN Human Rights Declaration was not published until 1988) or on violence against women and gender equality. This is why most people in such countries as Ukraine still cannot see and understand the full violent nature of their family members’ behaviour. It is necessary to develop a system to identify, prevent and stop violence against women and children in Ukraine.

Ukraine, being the first country of former Soviet Union to enact a law on the prevention of family violence, received support from the UNIFEM Fund for 2007-2008 to improve the legislation on violence against women and develop an effective system of violence prevention and help to women who are victims of violence. The International Humanitarian Centre ROZRADA, as a practical psychology centre that successfully helps women and works for gender equality in Ukraine, is one of the two NGOs implementing this project.

We have used the results of our investigations and practical work to develop and publish over 30 booklets and fliers for adults and teenagers as part of a broad information campaign against violence against women, domestic violence and children abuse.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


