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PhD Thesis Summary: *Support in a crisis. The role of social support in a suicidal situation among youth*

Globalization and dynamic economic, political and socio-cultural changes contribute to the overload of individuals in many areas of the live. One of the most serious consequences is the bad condition of mental health among children and youth. In Poland, the crisis in this area is reflected primarily in the growing number of suicidal behaviours among adolescents.

The period of adolescence is a transitional state between childhood and adulthood, in which young people experience challenges typical of this age phase. The individual faces new conflicts and problems as well as making difficult decisions, that may affect their future. External conditions such as growing up during the global COVID-19 pandemic is an additional burden. New challenges appearing in an individual's life are associated not only with great stress, but also with the possibility of a crisis, the solution of which can be overwhelming. In such moments, social support is an important protective factor that helps to overcome or survive the crisis. Meanwhile, the lack of social support effectively prevents constructive coping with difficult situations. Saving the body after a suicide attempt does not mean saving someone from suffering. A particular context affecting the situation of Polish young people is the financial and organisational collapse of the public support system for mental health crises making access to psychiatrists and psychologists difficult for those in need.

The doctoral dissertation is the result of own research conducted using the technique of semi-structured interviews with specialists working with children and youth in crisis. The interlocutors directly providing professional support were psychologists, psychotherapists, psychiatrists and community therapists. The study also involved school board inspectors, who supervise the school in the event of pupil's suicide.

The empirical analysis is an attempt to recognize the difficulties and crises of children and youth, as well as ways of effective prevention that can be introduced at various levels. I pay special attention to parents, teachers and specialists in the mental health of children and adolescents, as adults who significantly impact the formation of young individuals. The collected empirical material does not inspire optimism. According to the respondents, contemporary socio-cultural conditions are not conducive to closeness, building bonds and supporting young people struggling with diverse crises in their lives. As one of the interviewed specialists in the mental health of children and adolescents said: (...) *the world we have created*

is not the nicest place to live [p1]. The formed recommendations indicate specific ways to improve this situation, both at the level of system solutions and actions anyone can take daily.

In my considerations, I am inclined to a holistic analysis of the crisis, suicidal behaviour and social support to understand their origins, course and effects (and in the case of problems, solutions or recommendations). For this reason, the literature review concerned the discipline of social sciences (i.e. sociology), as well as psychology, psychiatry and pedagogy.

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