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### **EMOTIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMS AS A TOOL FOR STRESS PREVENTION IN THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

Relevance of the Topic: in today's educational environment, students and teachers face numerous challenges: high academic pressure, social expectations, and external instability such as war, pandemics, and economic hardship. These factors contribute to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional burnout.

Mental health has become a key factor in the success of the educational process. Without emotional stability, students cannot learn effectively, and teachers cannot teach efficiently.

Emotional literacy programs are a preventive tool that not only reduce stress levels but also help build a culture of emotional safety within schools.

Emotional literacy is the ability to recognize, understand, express, and regulate one's own emotions, as well as to understand the emotions of others.

It is a component of emotional intelligence, which, according to Daniel Goleman, includes:

1. Self-awareness – understanding one’s emotions, their causes, and consequences.
2. Self-regulation – the ability to manage emotional reactions and avoid impulsive behavior.
3. Motivation – an internal drive to achieve goals despite difficulties.
4. Empathy – the ability to understand and share the feelings of others.
5. Social skills – effective communication, conflict resolution, and building healthy relationships.

In the context of education, emotional literacy is as important as academic knowledge, as it lays the foundation for psychological resilience, social adaptation, and successful learning.

Emotional literacy programs can be implemented in various formats: thematic lessons: interactive sessions, workshops, role-playing activities; psychological practices: breathing exercises, mindfulness, relaxation techniques; integration into academic subjects: analyzing characters’ emotions in literature, discussing moral dilemmas in history, exploring emotional expression in art; teacher training: equipping educators with skills in emotional self-regulation, empathetic communication, and nonviolent interaction; parental involvement: organizing training sessions, consultations, and creating a unified emotional space between school and home.

Programs may be short-term (modular) or long-term (integrated into the curriculum).

Studies show that consistent implementation of emotional literacy programs: reduces anxiety, depression, and aggression; improves academic performance, attention span, and motivation; decreases conflict, bullying, and social isolation; increases satisfaction with learning, self-esteem, and confidence.

Examples of successful programs. CASEL (USA) – a model for social-emotional learning (SEL) applied across all education levels. PATHS – a program for primary school students focused on emotional vocabulary and self-regulation. RULER (Yale University) – a method for recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotions. New Ukrainian School (NUS) – integrates emotional literacy into national education standards and promotes safe learning environments.

Impact on Participants in the Educational Process. For Students: develop the ability to identify and articulate their emotions; increase emotional resilience and self-control; improve collaboration and conflict resolution skills; reduce impulsive behavior and aggression.

For Teachers: lower the risk of emotional burnout; enhance communication with students, colleagues, and parents; strengthen emotional self-regulation, contributing to professional longevity.

For Parents: gain a deeper understanding of the importance of emotional development; improve interaction with their children and reduce conflict; create a supportive emotional atmosphere at home.

Barriers and Challenges. Lack of qualified specialists in emotional education. Limited time in the school schedule for systematic implementation. Stereotypes that emotional education is unnecessary, especially for older students or among some educators. Insufficient institutional support, lack of funding, and a shortage of methodological resources. Psychological fatigue among teachers, who often need support themselves but lack access to quality mental health services.

#### Prospects for Development.

Institutionalizing emotional literacy as a mandatory component of the educational curriculum. Developing national programs tailored to cultural, social, and age-specific needs. Enhancing teacher qualifications through courses, training, supervision, and mentoring. Creating emotionally safe environments in every school – from classroom design to communication styles. Engaging NGOs, psychologists, and volunteers in program implementation. Using digital tools: mobile apps, online platforms, and interactive games to develop emotional literacy.

Conclusions. Emotional literacy programs are not a luxury but a necessity for building a healthy, effective, and humane educational environment. Their implementation not only reduces stress but also fosters a culture of emotional safety, trust, and support. Successful implementation requires a systemic approach, cross-sector collaboration, and support from the state, educational institutions, and parent communities. Emotional literacy is an investment in the future – in the health, success, and happiness of every child, teacher, and family.

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