

# A year of full-scale war in Ukraine: thoughts, feelings, actions

Findings of the fifth wave of research



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## ● Introduction

Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine has been a great social shock. The war affects emotional states, everyday lives and routines, public opinion, interpersonal relationships, socioeconomic situations, employment, civil activity. The scale of these changes is unprecedented for both Ukraine and Europe in the perspective of decades. At the same time, these changes will affect the future of social institutions in postwar Ukraine and its further development in general. Capturing and conceptualizing these changes allows us to obtain data both for future research of Ukrainian society after the war and for planning transformative changes.

As a team of social researchers and analysts, we have been studying and analyzing the impact of war on Ukrainian society since the first weeks of the full-scale war. In March 2022, we conducted our **first study** to capture the thoughts, feelings and actions of people in Ukraine during the first two weeks after February 24, 2022. In order to record the dynamics of changes in emotional states, decision making, and adaptation of everyday life to the conditions of war, we conducted another wave of the study every three months after that. So the **second wave of the study** was conducted in May 2022, focusing on the first three months of the full-scale war; the **third wave** was conducted in August 2022, focusing on the six months of the full-scale war; in November 2022, we conducted the **fourth wave**, dedicated to nine months of the full-scale war. In February–March 2023, we conducted the **fifth wave** to capture the impact of further developments and the changes caused by them. The results of its analysis are presented in this report.

## ● Methodology

**The goal** of the study was to capture (in progress, directly while the events were unfolding, rather than in retrospect), describe and generalize the experiences of war in Ukraine as well as trends of changes in these experiences over time.

**The subject** of the study are experiences of war in Ukrainian society.

For the purposes of this study, we include everyone who identifies with Ukrainian society in the category of Ukrainian

society. We do not exclude people who have no Ukrainian citizenship; people who have not lived in Ukraine for a while but who identify with Ukraine and Ukrainian society. We do not limit the subject of our research to civilians but also include combatants; however, we suppose that the latter have limited representation in the sample.

The focus of this study is the stage of the Russian-Ukrainian war known as the “full-scale war,” which began on February 24, 2022, as a result of the Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Even though the war began back in 2014, the scale of its impact on Ukrainian society changed and grew significantly as a result of the full-scale invasion, which was what motivated us to start working on this study.

The study is **exploratory**, meaning that its goal is primarily to describe reality rather than look for connections and explain causes. Since the goal of this study is to identify possible trends in experiences rather than assess them quantitatively, we chose a **qualitative approach**, just like for the previous waves. This allowed us to conduct a study with a similar methodology and to be able to compare the findings.

In order to collect the data, we used a **self-report questionnaire** designed in Google Forms. As the previous waves of the study showed, this option is simple and convenient for respondents because it has no temporal limitations, allows for non-mandatory answers, and allows the respondents to interrupt answering the questionnaire at any moment. Information about the study and the link to the form to be filled out was shared on Cedoss social media pages (including via targeted advertising from the Cedoss Facebook page), through the Cedoss mailing list, on the researchers’ personal pages, and in personal communication.

Since this study of the experiences of the full-scale war by Ukrainian society is the fifth such study, we call it the “fifth wave.” Despite this, the questionnaire only partially repeated the previous ones, because the situation in Ukraine had changed by February–March 2023 compared to November 2022 (the “fourth wave”), August 2022 (the “third wave”), May 2022 (the “second wave”), and March 2022 (the “first wave”). For example, after a year of the full-scale war, it seemed less relevant to us to repeatedly ask about the most important decisions since February 24, 2022, adaptations to life during the war, housing difficulties and volunteering. Instead, questions about blackouts, air raid warnings and mass

bombings, career development and changes in the experiences of war over time had become much more pressing. In view of this, we adapted the questionnaire and focused on questions that had become more important, given the developments and changes in the experiences of war over time. Nevertheless, some questions remained in the same or slightly modified form to maintain continuity.

**The questionnaire** contained questions that correlated with five dimensions associated with different spheres of human life through which we consider the experiences of war within this study:

- bodily dimension: questions about everyday life and routines;
- psychological dimension: questions about emotional experiences and feelings;
- social dimension: questions about remote communication, reflections on the experience of forced displacement;
- economic dimension: questions about the impact of blackouts, air raid warnings, bombings on work; changing ideas about one's future job or occupation; key concerns;
- public dimension: questions about changes in the ideas about the connection to Ukraine, attitudes to mobilization to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, thoughts about the course of the war.

In addition, the questionnaire contained final questions to determine the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents.

The questionnaire opened with an explanation about the goal of the study and the confidentiality of the collected information, as well as a warning that it contained questions on sensitive topics. In addition, the questionnaire included information about the services and platforms providing free-of-charge mental health aid and links to them. Most of the questions were open-ended, so the respondents were not limited to pre-set options. This way, we tried to encourage the respondents to describe their own experiences, motivations and feelings and to answer at more length.

Before the beginning of the survey, we conducted a pretest of the developed toolkit. The pretest was conducted among the

acquaintances of the research team members. The main goal of the pretest was to find out whether the question formulations were clear, whether the question formulations and the process of filling out the questionnaire provoked any psychological discomfort, and to check the average time it took to fill out the questionnaire.

The survey was conducted on February 21–March 13, 2023. 435 respondents participated in the survey during that time.

This report presents an analysis of the survey findings for all the questions which the study focused on, except for the question about attitudes towards mobilization, since this question is sensitive while the full-scale war is still underway.

## ● Research limitations

While conducting this study, we faced a number of challenges in terms of research methodology and ethics. The ways we chose to respond to these challenges determined the limitations of the research.

- The research sample is not representative of the population of Ukraine. The distribution of sociodemographic characteristics (such as gender, age, financial situation, size of settlement and region of residence, etc.) among the respondents does not reflect the distribution of these characteristics among the entire population of Ukraine. In view of this, the survey findings cannot be extrapolated to the entire population. In our reports on the findings of the survey, we describe experiences which really exist and which we were able to record. At the same time, this description of experiences is not exhaustive. The chosen methodology does not allow us to draw conclusions about how widespread these experiences are. Although we do make certain observations regarding the possible trends in the differences between the answers of people who belong to different social groups, they are not definite evidence of the existence of certain patterns, only hypotheses which require further research.
- The chosen method of data collection and questionnaire distribution could have affected the non-representation in the study sample of people who had no internet access in the period when the survey was conducted, as

well as those who have no skills of using the Google Forms platform.

- Due to security risks, lack of free time and potential lack of access to the internet or equipment, people who are currently in the occupied territories, in battle zones and areas of intensive shelling or close to them, as well as combatants can be underrepresented in the study sample. People who belong to these categories are present in the sample, but, given the security risks, the questionnaire does not contain any questions aiming to identify such respondents. In view of this, we cannot estimate their share in the sample or compare their answers to the answers of other respondents.
- Compared to the first wave of the study, in the fifth wave we managed to collect the experiences of fewer people (435 versus 555), so the dynamics of filling out the questionnaire were lower. We associate this with the state of general fatigue among the respondents and the fact that compared to the first week of the full-scale war, calls to participate in various studies of the impact of the war had become more common and evoked less interest. At the same time, the number of respondents who participated in the fifth wave of the study is higher than in the second (335), third (320), and fourth (352) waves. This can be linked to the fact that the survey coincided with the date marking one year since the full-scale invasion, which affected the desire to reflect on the experience of the war. In order to have the questionnaire filled out more times, in the second, third, fourth, and fifth waves we used targeted ads from the Cedos Facebook page aimed for the followers of the page and their friends. This target audience for paid distribution was also intended to make the sample more similar to the one we had during the first wave due to organic distribution (without advertising).
- Based on our experience of the previous waves of the survey, we employed a number of steps to ensure better representation among the respondents of social groups that were underrepresented in the previous waves (men, older people, low-income people). For this purpose, the form included a request for the respondents to ask, if possible, an older friend or relative to participate in the survey. In addition, we used targeted advertising from the Cedos Facebook page with a link to the questionnaire and a call to share one's experiences



which was aimed for the target groups (men and women of different ages, older men and women, men of different ages).

- Even though we shared the form using the same communication channels and sent links to it to the participants of the previous waves of the study who had agreed to participate in the next waves and left their contacts, the samples of the different waves were not the same. The forms were not identical either, although they did include a number of similar or the same questions. In view of this, the possibilities for comparing different waves of the study are limited. We compare them wherever it is relevant and appropriate. However, comparisons of this kind are not definite evidence for the existence of certain patterns, but rather hypotheses about possible trends which require further research.
- The self-reported questionnaire with a significant number of open-ended questions presupposed the method of recording one's own experience and feelings in writing. A limitation or consequence of choosing this method is the fact that recording one's own experiences in writing inevitably leads to higher narrativization of the story and encourages one to rationalize their experiences, which was taken into account while analyzing the data.
- The data collection took place in the time period which included the date that marked one year since the beginning of the full-scale war. While sharing the questionnaire, we also referred to this memorable date as an opportunity to reflect on one's own experience during the year and share it by participating in the study. The date of February 24, as well as the mention of it in the distribution of the questionnaire, could have affected both the number of collected answers and the answers themselves.
- The engagement of the researchers, that is, the fact that they themselves are, to different extents, experiencing the full-scale war and forced displacement, can be both an advantage and a limitation of the study. On the one hand, it can facilitate more reflection and sensitivity to the obtained data as a result of comparing them to personal experiences. On the other hand, it can produce certain preset analytical frameworks which affect the interpretation of the obtained data. In order to avoid cognitive or experiential distortion, the work with the

obtained data was distributed among the researchers both at the stage of analysis and interpretation and at the stage of mutual editing.

This study is not comprehensive. Its findings record the variety of experiences of war and their modification during a certain period of time, but they cannot be extrapolated to the entire population of Ukraine and the entire period of the war, because the diversity of experiences of the war is larger and more multifaceted. They require many further studies, from representative nationwide research to studies focused on specific topics and social groups.

## ● Sample description

The average age of the respondents at the time of filling out the questionnaire was 42. The youngest participant of the study was 14, and the oldest was 82. 1% of the respondents were under 18, 9% of the participants of the study belonged to the early working age (18–24),<sup>1</sup> more than a half (67%) of the respondents belonged to the core working age category (25–54), 17% belonged to the mature working age category (55–64), and 5% of the respondents belonged to the elderly age group (65 and older). 1% of the study participants refrained from answering the question about their age.

The majority (69%) of the study participants were women, and a little more than a quarter were men (28%). The answers of 2% of the respondents were outside the binary options of male or female, including answers from non-binary and agender people. The majority (69%) of the people who participated in the study were married or in a romantic relationship. 1% did not answer this question. The respondents who had children (under 18) living with them constituted a little more than a quarter (28%). Among them, 19% had one child, 6% had two children, 2% had three children, and 1% had more than three children. 1% of the respondents did not answer this question.

For 8% of the respondents, secondary education was the highest education degree they had obtained by the time of filling out the questionnaire. 10% of the study participants had professional/professional-technical education. The majority

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<sup>1</sup> According to the categorization of age groups based on working ability used by UN experts in their socioeconomic and demographic calculations.

(73%) of the study participants had higher education degrees. 9% had a PhD.

A little over a half (57%) of the respondents were employees at the time of the study; 20% were self-employed (freelancers, self-employed without employees), 7% were retired; another 7% were students; 4% were entrepreneurs with employees; 3% were unemployed; 2% were on maternity leave; 1% chose the option “Other”; and 1% of the study participants did not answer this question<sup>2</sup>.

The respondents described the financial situation of their household at the time of filling out the questionnaire as follows: 6% could not afford enough food; 27% could afford food but could not always afford clothes; 35% could afford food and clothes, but could not always buy household appliances; 24% could afford household appliances but not a car or an apartment; 6% could buy a car or other goods of similar value. 1% of the respondents did not answer this question.

The study participants described the financial situation of their households as of February 24 as follows: 3% could not afford enough food; 9% could afford food but could not always afford clothes; 31% could afford food and clothes, but could not always buy household appliances; 44% could afford household appliances but not a car or an apartment; 12% could buy a car or other goods of similar value. 1% of the respondents did not answer this question.

40% of the respondents permanently lived in Kyiv as of February 24; 20% lived in Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipro or Lviv; 17% lived in other regional centers; 14% lived in other cities and towns (not regional centers); 8% did not live in cities or towns. 1% of the study participants did not answer this question.

A little less than a half (49%) of the fifth wave participants did not move due to the war from their permanent place of residence as of February 24, 2022. More than a third (37%) moved within Ukraine, and less than a fifth (19%) moved abroad<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The respondents could choose several options to answer this question.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents could choose several options in reply to the question about the experience of moving.

# Part 1 ● Changes

## 1.1 ● Concerns

Just like in the previous waves of the survey, we asked the respondents what concerned them the most<sup>4</sup> at the moment of filling out the questionnaire (in this case in February–March 2023). It is important to note that some of the concerns were the same as in November and August 2022. However, some trends had become less prominent, while others, on the contrary, were more visible in the answers.

A year after the beginning of the full-scale invasion, one of the respondents' biggest concerns were **related to the war**: the course of the war; intensified bombings, particularly on the day of February 24, 2023; Ukraine's defense capability and international support; potential intensification of Russian offensive actions; support for Russian aggression by China and Iran; the situation of Ukrainian soldiers; losses among the military and civilians; mobilization.

One of the key aspects was the **length and ending of the war**. A significant share of the respondents directly said in their answers that they were concerned about “when the war will end” and wrote about Ukraine achieving victory as soon as possible. At the same time, this wave of the study revealed an even more prominent tendency towards concerns about the potential continuation of the war indefinitely, and worries that the war would not end in the near future.

“Like most people. That nobody who is defending and supporting Ukraine dies. That we receive aid from friendly countries of the world as soon as possible. That Ukraine wins. That the war ends. Returning to the regular peaceful life”.

Man, 47, Kyiv

“How long the war is going to last, I'm concerned about the weapons supply from Iran to Russia. Especially since January, tension started to rise when there were no air raid sirens for a few days, and I felt relieved when I finally heard them, the sounds of air defense systems or that UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles] were flying. It's a kind of psychological deformation by now”.

Woman, 27, Kyiv

“Doubts that the war will end in the next few years, the number of people killed, and how long it will take to rebuild everything after it ends”.

Woman, 23, Volyn Region

“I'm extremely worried about the military, how are they there? That there's nobody to replace them. How are their families coping? I'm

<sup>4</sup> Question formulation: “What concerns you the most right now?”

ashamed and at the same time mad at those who evade mobilization. It's really painful. I'm not even thinking anymore about the people in the occupied territories or in the line of fire. Who have died or the POWs. I can't anymore".

Woman, 47, Odesa

Some respondents mentioned uncertainty not only about when the war will end but also about **what the political and economic situation in postwar Ukraine will be and how the rebuilding will be taking place**. In addition, some expressed concerns about the possibility of another attack by Russia in the future and the beginning of another war.

"Doubts that the war will end in the next few years, the number of people killed, and how long it will take to rebuild everything after it ends".

Woman, 23, Volyn Region

"[...] The postwar period, it may be even more difficult than now".

Woman, 18, Kyiv

"As a young student, I'm worried about future employment, because it's unlikely that there will be economic prosperity in the postwar years. [...]"

Woman, 18, town, Kharkiv Region

"That the war will last a long time; that there will be a lot of social problems afterwards related to the rights/treatment of the military, housing for the internally displaced, etc. [...]"

Woman, 37, Kyiv Region

Similarly to the previous waves of the study, a key concern for the respondents was still **their own safety and the safety of their loved ones**. In particular, survey participants were worried about their family and loved ones in areas near the frontline or in the occupied territories, or in localities which had suffered from missile strikes for a while, as well as for their loved ones serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine (hereafter referred to as the AFU). The respondents also expressed fear for their own lives due to bombings.

"I'm more often worried about my family in occupied Mariupol, because I've heard stories from witnesses about the de-occupation of towns and cities in the Kharkiv Region. It's a harsh, dangerous process, and rehabilitation of cities is difficult. Since early February, I've often dreamt about returning home but feeling completely alienated from the city and the people in it. My sister complains about harassment of her and her teenage friends by soldiers and the workers brought there to rebuild the city. I'm worried that something can happen to her".

Woman, 22, Kharkiv

A prominent tendency that carried on from the previous waves involved **concerns about uncertainty of the future**. Fear of the future, lack of confidence in tomorrow, and the difficulty of long-term planning could be observed in every wave of the study. Even though by the ninth month of the full-scale war the respondents [said](#) that they were already able to make long-term plans, in this wave of the study the participants were still concerned about uncertainty of the future and impossibility of long-term planning.

Unlike the previous wave of the study, conducted in November 2022, much fewer respondents mentioned **concerns related to blackouts and interruptions of water supply and other utilities**. It is apparently due to the fact that by the time of our data collection during this wave of the survey, this problem was no longer as relevant for many Ukrainian regions as it was in the period between October 2022 and the first half of February 2023. On the other hand, the answers revealed a fear that blackouts could start again and it would affect the everyday life and work of the study participants.

“Subconscious apprehension: that there will be an air raid warning; that there will be no power, water, heating”.

Woman, 52, Kyiv

“The threat of a repeated offensive, air raid warnings, potential return to blackouts if they damage something again”.

Woman, 29, Kyiv

Just like in the previous wave of the study, the respondents’ **concerns about employment and their own financial situation** were rather prominent. Price increases, unemployment, potential layoffs at work, insufficient, reduced and/or delayed remuneration—all these issues continue to concern the respondents in February–March 2023. The answers express different concerns depending on whether the respondents had a job or were in the process of job search. Those study participants who had a job expressed concerns about the possibility of losing it or having their pay reduced.

“Work: sometimes I have it for 2–3–4 months, sometimes they ask me to go on unpaid leave for 1–2 months, because the firm has no money to pay wages. They haven’t done layoffs, but nobody quit either, so we do the same amount of work as before the war, just in a shorter period of time, and therefore for lower wages”.

Woman, 30, Lviv

“Instability at work, delayed payment of salary, food getting more expensive”.

Woman, 51, Zaporizhia



Those who had no job or who had just lost a job were more concerned about being **unable to find a job which would match their qualification** and provide decent pay for their labor<sup>5</sup>. In addition, some respondents noted that they had been looking for a job for quite a while and were afraid of not finding employment at all.

“The hospital in Kharkiv where I work is being closed due to the lack of a contract with the National Health Service of Ukraine. I’ll be left without a job. With low chances of finding a job as a doctor in Kharkiv”.

Woman, 47, Kharkiv

“Because many students have left Kyiv, not all classes have been opened, and my contract was not extended. And I’ve been working at school all my life since 1973”.

Woman, 71, Kyiv

Just like in the previous wave of the study, some respondents pointed out that they saw no opportunities for their self-realization and felt uncertain about their career plans.

“That I’m incapable of working for the long term, I have no ideas who I want to be and how to achieve it, I’m afraid of wasting time in vain and being left with nothing later”.

Woman, 20, Kyiv

A significant share of the respondents were worried about their financial situation and financial difficulties faced by them and their family and loved ones. The answers demonstrate **fear and anxiety about insufficient income** to cover basic needs such as food, medicine, housing for oneself and one’s family. Worries about the discrepancy between one’s financial situation and price increases concerned a significant number of the participants.

“1. Low income. 2. Search for a better job. 3. Increasing food prices. 4. Prices of medicine due to increased seasonal illnesses (viral infections) among family members”.

Woman, 37, Boryspil, Kyiv Region

“Financial situation. I live solely off my pension. I lost my job on March 24, 2022”.

Man, 63, Kyiv

“Economic situation in the country: food and utility prices spiked very sharply. If the situation doesn’t change, I’m afraid there’d be a famine (due to lack of food)”.

Woman, 37, village, Vinnytsia Region

<sup>5</sup> Read more on career plans and professional development in Part 2 “Work.”



"High rent, lack of opportunity to go back to work. My maternity leave ends in July".

Woman, 34, Kharkiv

Just like during the previous wave of the study, the respondents' concerns included the **feeling of shame for not doing enough for the victory or the desire to be as useful as possible**. Some claimed that they felt ashamed for not participating in the defense of Ukraine.

"The situation on the frontline. I only help with money, I feel like my help is too small".

Woman, 46, Dnipro

"The feeling of shame and guilt for not being on the frontline".

Woman, 27, Kyiv

In this wave of the study, the respondents also noted that they were concerned about **personal relationships not only with their loved ones and family, but also relationships between Ukrainians** in general. In particular, the most frequently mentioned were difficulties in relationships with both family and loved ones who are far away and those with whom the respondents lived together. In addition, some respondents were anxious about the feelings of loneliness and the lack of social life. A number of the participants also drew attention to relationships between Ukrainians, particularly factors dividing the society. These factors were very similar to the ones we specified in the previous wave of the study: the language issue, differences in political views, attitudes towards the war. Some respondents also noted "increased aggression" and "radicalization in society," without clarifying what they meant.

"[...] conflicts between Ukrainians: those who have stayed and those who have left, those with liberal and radical views, military and civilians, etc. [...]"

Woman, 26, Kyiv

"Aggression and cruelty among the people around me. There's so much hatred in people today. It makes me really sad".

Man, 26, Kyiv

Just like in the previous waves, the respondents reported concerns about **their own health and the health of their loved ones**. This included both physical and mental health. The study participants noted the feelings of anxiety, exhaustion and tiredness, as well as the general deterioration of their mental state. Sometimes they pointed out that the state of their

mental health directly affected whether they were able to work and provide for themselves<sup>6</sup>.

“As for me personally, I’m the most concerned about the fact that I’m out of strength. The entire January I was probably on the verge of depression because I slept a lot, all day long. This, of course, affects work. Work gets delayed, which causes strong pangs of conscience and the level of anxiety increases, and as a result, the feeling of powerlessness increases even more. It is a vicious circle”.

Woman, 35, Kyiv

“Mental health, I’m worried I won’t be able to provide for myself due to nervous breakdowns”.

Woman, 25, Kyiv

“[...] I’m retired, I’m often ill, and there are also problems with transportation and health care (the medical facility is far away and difficult to get to)”.

Man, 65, town, Kharkiv Region

In this wave of the study, we also **singled out the concerns of the people who had to move abroad**.<sup>7</sup> Their main concerns included the following: the lack of adaptation and integration in their country of residence; the language barrier; separation from their family who have stayed in Ukraine; job search; and bureaucratic processes.

“What I’m going to live off in the European country I’ve moved to. How to maintain connections to my nearest and dearest whom I haven’t seen for a long time due to the war. When the active stage of the war and bombings will end, so that I’m not afraid to return home to Kyiv. Adaptation, which is not happening: I’ve been living in a torn state for a year, physically in Western Europe and mentally in Ukraine”.

Woman, 37, Kyiv

“The language barrier and everything related to it; the cultural barrier; the fear that I won’t be able to adapt in Germany and that Ukraine will also no longer be “the same,” because people are in a deep collective trauma and in trauma response, and all of this causes the fear of being stuck and never adapting anywhere. All everyday tasks are made more difficult by the need to do them in two foreign languages”.

Woman, 25, Kharkiv

<sup>6</sup> Read more about the link between exhaustion combined with stress and health problems in Part 4 “Feelings.”

<sup>7</sup> Read more details about the experiences of moving in Part 5.2 “Experience of Forced Displacement.”

"The legal aspect of my stay abroad. It'll soon be time to extend my papers, file an income declaration, extend medical insurance—all of this is new or bureaucratic, and in a language which I speak poorly".

Woman, 26, Poltava

Both those who had to move abroad and those who had to move within Ukraine noted that they felt uncertainty and a lack of understanding of **whether they and their loved ones would be able to return to their hometowns or to Ukraine.**

"Whether my family will be able to return home, because right now that territory is occupied".

Woman, 52, village, Luhansk Region

"When Ukraine will defeat the pigdogs from Moscovia. Will my children return home? Will I return?"

Man, 60, Zaporizhia

## 1.2 ● Impact of separation on communication with loved ones

In the previous waves of the study, we focused on how the full-scale war affected communication between family and loved ones. A significant share of the study participants spoke about the experience of separation from their family or friends, which affected their relationships in different ways.<sup>8</sup> That is why in the fifth wave of the survey, which summarizes the experience of life during the first year of the full-scale war, we decided to ask in more detail how separation had affected communication with loved ones.<sup>9</sup>

A significant share of the respondents reported having had experiences of separation from their loved ones since February 2022. At the time of filling out the questionnaire, many study participants still continued to live away from their family or friends. Meanwhile, for others, separation was already in the past, and they spoke about it in retrospect. Most respondents noted the negative impact of separation on communication, but a number of the respondents also said that their relationships with loved ones had improved.

The respondents primarily noted that **separation from their loved ones had negatively affected their mental and emotional state**. In the [previous](#) waves of the study, we pointed out that communication with friends and family was one of the main sources of emotional support. The respondents who were unable to regularly communicate with their loved ones felt depressed, sad, helpless, and afraid. The experience of separation also affected the productivity and stress resistance among some respondents. The situation was especially hard for those whose family and loved ones had remained in the occupied territories, in places near the frontline, or in territories which were actively bombed, because connection to these people was unstable.

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<sup>8</sup> Other researchers also note this trend. According to the findings of a [survey](#) by the Rating Sociology Group, 44% of Ukrainians had to temporarily separate from their family at the beginning of the full-scale invasion. A year later, only 21% were still separated. The majority of those who experienced family separation had already been through that challenge by February 2023, and 20% reported that their relationships had even improved.

<sup>9</sup> Question formulation: "As a result of the war, many people are away from their loved ones. If this is your experience, how has it affected your communication?"

"When there is no news from family, it's horrible; if there is a connection, even if it's poor, they're alive, healthy, and everything is alright".

Woman, 57, Energodar, Zaporizhia Region

"[...] I'm very depressed that there is no contact with the occupied territories and no connection with my loved one there [...]".

Woman, 46, Zaporizhia

"[The experience of separation from loved ones] weakened my stress resistance capacity, reduced my productivity".

Man, 42, Nizhyn, Chernihiv Region

A significant share of the respondents continued to keep in touch with their family and friends by phone and on social media. Even though this allowed them to be connected to their loved ones, **the lack of in-person communication had also negatively affected their mental and emotional state** and provoked anxiety, despair, and sadness. The respondents noted that compared to in-person meetings, the quality of online communication was lower. For example, they described long-distance communication as "less sincere." This may be related to the emotional management strategies employed by the study participants or their loved ones.<sup>10</sup> For instance, the respondents mentioned that their family and friends tried to only share good news, to seem happy and positive, which sometimes did not reflect reality. In addition, the respondents themselves used the verb "hanging on" while describing their own experience, and said that they were trying to "suppress" negative emotions and feelings caused by separation and lack of communication.

"This is our experience, because I'm abroad with the kid, and my husband is in the AFU. We only talk in an online messenger by texting, not every day. We've only had three video calls for the past year. I really miss communication and physical presence".

Woman, 32, Brovary, Kyiv Region

"Stress. Absolute stress. Mom is very ill. But I can't visit her. She's in Germany, I'm in Ukraine. It's just a tragedy. Good thing there's audio and video connection. It won't replace in-person communication. But it's definitely better than nothing".

Man, 57, Kharkiv

"I can't hug my five-year-old grandson, be close to him, be in his life at all... they're beyond the ocean... I feel like my personal future has been taken away from me..."

Woman, 63, Kharkiv

"[...] It was unexpected that seeing your loved ones after a long separation is even worse than not seeing them. On the phone,

<sup>10</sup> Read more on emotional management strategies in Part 4 "Feelings."

everyone is a bit happier, more positive, they tell you various good things that have happened (how we've been here and there, in this park, etc.). But when you're next to them, you can see how strongly the war actually affects your family [...]"

Woman, 28, Kyiv

"My mental health is at the bottom, I really miss my friends and family, I try to suppress these feelings but nothing good comes out of it. So I occasionally work with a therapist".

Woman, 29, Starobilsk, Luhansk Region

As a result of separation, the everyday experiences of the respondents and their loved ones had started to diverge. For example, someone could find new friends or a new job. The participants reported that **geographic distance also provoked emotional distance**. The study participants noted that without time spent together, such as going for a walk or attending events, it was sometimes difficult for them to find topics to talk about with their friends or family. While describing their own experience, the respondents said that they were becoming "strangers" for their loved ones. They also noted that the war and separation affected their communication with friends more negatively than with family.

"We are going through life at different speeds. In the same direction for now, but it won't last long. We're becoming strangers to each other".

Woman, 36, Izium, Kharkiv Region

"Negatively, I feel some alienation from my partner. The differences in our experiences at the beginning of the war also affects it".

Man, 36, Kyiv

"[...] I've been away from my family for almost a year now. My wife and I have started talking less, I feel that the distance between me and her and our daughter is increasing".

Man, 35, Kyiv

"The connection to my family remains rather close, but it's become harder to communicate with friends. First of all, it's very sad, so it sometimes seems that it's best not to see each other at all. Second, we can't feel their problems from our own experience, and they can't feel ours, and this also creates a distance".

Man, 32, Dnipro

"I've lost tight connections to close friends. Communication with my family hasn't been affected by the war".

Woman, 22, Lviv

The respondents mentioned that maintaining long-distance communication requires additional effort, particularly emotional effort. They noted that in the conditions of the war,

they felt a duty to talk to their loved ones, and they emphasized that they were working to avoid losing touch with them. For some, it meant frequent trips, for instance, to other Ukrainian cities, for others it meant regular calls and texting. On the one hand, it allowed the respondents to receive emotional support. On the other hand, difficulties and obstacles in communication could negatively affect the mental and emotional state of the study participants, for example, make them feel exhausted and tired of communication. Some also noted that they felt guilty and ashamed if they did not pay enough attention to their loved ones.

“All my family is in Mariupol, and I left alone from a different city. I talk to my younger relatives more: my brother and sister. It’s very hard for them, and I help them morally and with school. They see an authority in me. It’s not always interesting for me to talk to my family, but now I can’t ignore them, and I have to listen to boring things to show attention. [...] My mom and grandma cry every time we finish a call”.

Woman, 22, Kharkiv

“Yes, it’s my biggest problem, the family torn apart, at least I try to pay attention to everyone as much as I can. My daughter and granddaughter are in Rivne (we see each other once in three-four months and daily online), my son is in Cherkasy, and I spend a week with him and a week with my husband in Kharkiv. I’m tired, but we’re hanging on”.

Woman, 51, Derhachi, Kharkiv Region

“I talk to my parents every day at the same time. Sometimes it feels like a duty, but it’s hard not to talk, because then I have thoughts like “what if something happens, and I didn’t talk.” I feel a distance from my friends, I close off from them because I don’t feel like we have topics in common”.

Woman, 26, Poltava

“I really miss my close circle of friends who have stayed in Ukraine or moved somewhere. I’ve developed new social connections where I am, but they’re superficial and can’t replace deep communication. I feel torn away from my context and like I’m missing something very important because I’m not in Ukraine”.

Woman, 37, Kyiv

Separation from loved ones led to the **feeling of loneliness and isolation**. The respondents’ answers also demonstrate frustration and anxiety caused by uncertainty about the future and inability to plan their next meeting with their loved ones. Some respondents noted that they themselves had become more withdrawn during the full-scale war and purposefully limited their own circle.



"We're constantly in touch, but I really miss them, and sometimes it feels like it's forever".

Man, 44, Kharkiv

"I haven't seen my family for more than a year, and I don't know when we'll see each other".

Woman, 46, Severodonetsk

"My daughter is far away, abroad. I'm very lonely. But we try to talk on the phone every day".

Man, 32, Kyiv

"I've become very introverted even for an introvert. Maybe it's already depression. Although I don't feel unhappy. Empty chatter is irritating. And sometimes I miss those few people with whom I could talk about the most important things".

Woman, 39, Kyiv

Some of the surveyed noted that their **children took separation from their family harder than they themselves**.

"[...] Distance from her father affects my kid a lot. There are more and less difficult periods. There was a time when my daughter cried for her father every day, and it was truly horrible. At the same time I'm sure that our situation isn't the worst. I'm infinitely grateful to my daughter's father that he's in touch with her every day. He reads books to her for hours every evening. Sometimes they do homework or play computer games. Essentially, they spend enough quality time together [...]".

Woman, 35, Kyiv

The answers of study participants reveal a **yearning for the past**. As they contemplated the impact of separation on communication, the respondents noted that they were sad about the time they couldn't spend together with their loved ones as a result of the war. The respondents expressed concern about whether they would be able to make up for what they had lost and maintain the depth of contacts with family and friends. These feelings intersected with missing their home and life before the full-scale war. Some respondents described their own strategies of coping with these feelings and noted that they tried to reduce the presence of triggers that could remind them of their past lives. For example, one respondent said that she avoided video calls with her husband so that she did not see her own apartment.

"[...] We lived separately with my husband for 9 months, it was painful for me to have video calls with him because I could see my apartment, my home, which I missed. So we had more audio calls. I even asked him not to show our cats or house on video, because it really hurt me [...]. I talk to my friends much less, only occasionally.



I'm lonely without my friends nearby, there's nobody to have a coffee with, nobody to visit or go for a walk with".

Woman, 30, Kharkiv

"[...] I haven't seen my dad since April 2022. Same with my friends, we only met once in October in Kyiv. I feel isolated due to the distance. As for my father, it's a feeling of guilt for being far away, and I don't know how long he has to live, and I'm wasting time being far away. As for my friends, I feel sad and nostalgic about the past years together, there's a fear of losing the connection, but we keep in touch online".

Woman, 22, Kyiv

"My son and I only talk to my husband online for a year now, and grandparents also only see their grandson online. I don't know how we're going to rebuild the relationships after the reunion. My son has grown up a lot in this time, when we were leaving, he was just 1.8. Before, my husband and I cared for him in equal shares, this year everything is on me, my husband has already forgotten how to care for and entertain the kid. But we're constantly in touch, we try to keep in touch as much as we can, we call every day or even a few times a day".

Woman, 34, Kyiv

Despite everything, some respondents said that separation, on the contrary, **made their communication with loved ones stronger and better**. They noted that this experience allowed them to become more sensitive and caring. The respondents mentioned that the experience of separation made them closer to their friends and family, encouraged them to keep in touch more often than before the war, and to show their love. This also resonates with the findings of the third wave of the [study](#), in which we noted that the war caused the respondents to contact their loved ones more often. The study participants also noted that after facing the potential threat of losing their loved ones, they had grown to value communication with them more. The war encouraged some of them to "live in the moment," stop delaying meetings with their family or friends, and use every opportunity to be together with their loved ones. Communication became a solace for them and a source of emotional support.

"I was away from my husband for the first half a year (I stayed at my parents' in Ivano-Frankivsk region). So on the one hand, I was further away from my husband, but on the other hand, I spent more time with my parents. This experience affected our communication more positively. My husband and I value each other even more. I didn't even expect that I'd feel so good and comfortable with my parents".

Woman, 39, Kyiv

"On the contrary, this winter we used the holidays and days off to visit parents and friends, we stopped delaying meetings. Meetings with family and friends really helped morally".

Woman, 36, Kyiv

"Personally for me, for the best. Distance and constant danger made my family more tolerant".

Man, 47, Mykolayiv

"My wife and daughter moved to Ivano-Frankivsk region. But this only makes our family stronger. "You see big things from a distance.""

Man, 47, village, Mykolayiv Region

"Mom has started saying she loves me. We haven't seen each other since January last year".

Woman, 27, Kyiv

## Part 2 ● Work

## 2.1 ● Impact of blackouts, air raid warnings, and bombings on work and business

In the previous wave of the study, the respondents were particularly likely to talk about the impact of mass bombings, blackouts, water or heating supply interruptions on their everyday life, routines, daily and more long-term planning. Work is an important part of people's lives, and in this wave we decided to dive deeper into the question of how blackouts, bombings, and air raid sirens affected the respondents' work.<sup>11</sup>

The only category of respondents who did not have to deal with this at all were those who had no job or business in Ukraine at the time of the survey.<sup>12</sup> Everyone else had faced the impact of factors caused by the war on their job or enterprise. Even the respondents who had to move abroad due to the war or who lived in regions where bombings or air raid sirens were not that frequent had something to say in response to this question. The impact of air raid warnings on their work was indirect. **If some of their colleagues and/or clients were located in areas where bombings, blackouts, and air raid sirens were a problem, everyone had to plan their work differently** and complete tasks with a delay.

"I'm abroad almost the whole time, so it didn't affect me, the only thing is that it's gotten more difficult to schedule meetings. On the days of bombings, you could say that there is no work".

Woman, 22, Kyiv

"I'm abroad, so I can work on my own time, but many of my colleagues remain in Ukraine, and I have to take into account that they sometimes drop out due to lack of connection or difficult emotional states".

Woman, 32, Kyiv

In the case of the respondents who had not moved abroad and were not based in areas where bombings and air raid warnings were a rare occurrence, their work and entrepreneurship were certainly affected by shelling, air raid sirens, and blackouts, and often the impact was rather significant. The respondents suffered the most from the fact that these factors **forced them**

<sup>11</sup> Question formulation: "If you work (including as a freelancer or contractor) or have a business, please tell us how your work is affected by blackouts, air raid warnings, bombings."

<sup>12</sup> This refers to people employed in Ukraine and working for Ukrainian companies and/or engaged in entrepreneurship (particularly as self-employed people), even if they are physically staying abroad.

**to work longer hours:** their working day was interrupted, and as a result it lasted longer than usual.

For a significant share of the respondents, blackouts, bombings, and air raid warnings meant that **their work had to stop for a certain period of time.**

"I'm an electrician, and when power is cut off, my work stops. Air raid sirens and bombings force me to be ready 24/7 and cause major discomfort".

Man, 44, Kharkiv

"Work just stops when there's an air raid warning or there's no power".

Woman, 48, Mykolayiv

"A blackout makes work much more difficult, and sometimes stops it completely".

Man, 36, Bolhrad, Odesa Region

"In December, I could only work when there was power. It was horrible. My work really depends on internet access".

Woman, 34, Vinnytsia

The respondents shared that air raid sirens, bombings, and blackouts **interrupted the usual working day, creating forced pauses:** even if work did not stop completely, **some or most of the work was impossible to do.**

They had to catch up on the lost time mostly by working after hours or by working much more intensely during the hours that remained. Whereas the employees or the self-employed who worked from home could use the pause to do household chores, cook, or rest, the situation was especially difficult for those whose work required them to stay at the institution or office. It was difficult to use the time spent at a shelter or a room without power to have a rest, and at the same time they had to do the work tasks themselves outside the normal working hours.

"I work as a teacher [...]. When there is no power, and therefore no internet, it's impossible to teach online classes. During air raid sirens, students and we go down to the shelter. And then we have to compensate for the classes we did not have because of it (the school administration demands that we have consultations during the time free from our main workload). [...] the working conditions have gotten worse".

Woman, 64, Irpin, Kyiv Region

"I work in construction. There are jobs you can do without power, but there are a number of tasks which are simply impossible to do without power tools.. [...]"

Man, 30, village, Kherson Region

"Air raid warnings and bombings interfere with my work because they take away the time when I have to stay in a shelter".

Woman, 56, Kyiv

Both those who worked from home and those who worked at an institution/office and had to finish work at home faced **difficulties with their life-work balance**. In addition, people were often **forced to work at night**.

"I work on a desktop computer. And at first blackouts completely took me out of work. In autumn, when there were long blackouts, I used to take my computer and go to my friends' places to finish jobs on time. When there were scheduled blackouts, I worked when there was electricity and slept when there was none".

Woman, 30, Kyiv

"Higher workload at work. I have to work at the computer when there is power. Sometimes work accumulates, so you work at night".

Woman, 42, Dnipro

"It's gotten more difficult to work due to blackouts, sometimes you work at night when they turn on the power in order to be able to do everything you need to do in those hours".

Woman, 36, village, Odesa Region

Even intense labor and additional work during hours which are intended for resting did not always allow the respondents to completely minimize the impact of the difficulties with the working process caused by the war. So tasks were often delayed. **The forced slowing down of the working pace** was mentioned both by employees and by those who had their own businesses or who were self-employed.

"The working and personal time have gotten mixed up, I work overtime but much more slowly. [...]"

Woman, 37, village, Kyiv Region

"Double time required to do the work, loss of profit. But my customers understand everything. My ability to work, even in this way, is a miracle made by the AFU and everyone who is fighting".

Woman, 33, Ukrayinka, Kyiv Region

"Blackouts have had a significant effect. I have less time for work and sleep. To compensate for the costs of expensive additional electric equipment, I had to take extra work and work much more. Some work processes and tasks are disrupted or prolonged".

Woman, 33, Odesa

"My firm continues to work (furniture manufacturing). Of course, it is very difficult to stick to the manufacturing deadlines".

Man, 47, Kyiv

For those who were self-employed or had a business, delays and missed deadlines could have serious consequences: **reduced orders and volumes of work and therefore reduced profits.**

"All of this slows down the work processes, delays the deadlines, it's impossible to plan, partners refuse to cooperate. We barely make any profit or even take losses".

Woman, 52, Kyiv

"Significantly reduced number of orders and production volumes".

Man, 59, Rivne

"My main work is renovation and construction, insulation installation [...]. But for now we just replace shattered windows with USB,<sup>13</sup> [shelling] affects it, and strongly. People don't want to do repairs yet due to shelling".

Man, 63, Kherson

"Now I look for premises with a shelter/in a shelter for my projects. I no longer organize mass events because I can't plan them and guarantee safety to the visitors. [...]"

Woman, 29, Dnipro

Some respondents said that they **had to put their businesses on hold or even shut them down** due to falling numbers of orders and decreasing profits.

"Due to blackouts, I had to completely put the manufacturing on hold. Because the power supply schedule of 4 by 4 hours is impossible for production: the technological process requires uninterrupted work for 8–10 hours straight".

Woman, 59, Kyiv

"My business has been killed by the war, I partially lost commissions as a freelancer due to blackouts".

Woman, 49, Kyiv

Difficulties such as the blurred boundaries between working and non-working hours were familiar for many respondents from their experience of working from home during the COVID-19 restrictions, but during the full-scale war the situation had gotten much more difficult. There were many more factors that could negatively affect the organization of work; they were difficult to predict or control from the outside. Even in the case of blackouts, despite the availability of

<sup>13</sup> This refers to covering windows with window film, including USB (UltraSolarBlock) film.

blackout schedules, a significant share of people faced unplanned emergency blackouts. All of this **made it difficult for the respondents to organize their working hours and plan their work.**

"With the blackouts, I only manage to do half of my normal amount of work, but I get twice as fed up with it because I can't own my time. I can't fix this technologically, because no matter how many power banks or other devices I have, mobile internet isn't enough, and I have no access to fiber-optic internet or Starlinks. [...]"

Woman, 29, Kyiv

"[...] Blackouts really annoy me, they break my plans, they don't allow me to concentrate fully on work or leisure, everything gets mixed up".

Man, 32, Kharkiv

As we mentioned above, some people had to deal with the impact of bombings, blackouts and air raid warnings on their work indirectly, through their colleagues or business partners. Different blackout schedules, teams scattered in different cities or even regions were an additional risk factor for organizing work.

"[...] during blackouts, I worked a bit from home while my laptop charge lasted, and a bit from coffee shops nearby (I got lucky with my place of residence [...]). But the work that depends on my partners in different regions was often delayed: many meetings were postponed because some of their participants in the regions had no way to connect during blackouts. Some tasks were completed a week or two later than planned for the same reason".

Woman, 29, Irpin, Kyiv Region

"It was horrible. Either I have no electricity, or my client, or my accountant, or the implementer, or the contractor. There were a lot of nerves. There's little work right now, and then there are these mismatches on top of it. But we managed".

Woman, 62, Kyiv

"[...] Since my colleagues and I have different blackout schedules, I have to do the work at night when there is power and my colleague sends me her part of the work for tomorrow late at night. My daily schedule is completely messed up. [...]"

Woman, 30, Lviv

Some respondents also mentioned **worse working conditions due to the lack of heating during blackouts.**

"It's harder to commute to work or home. At work, it's cold and dark without power, the database doesn't work (the generator often breaks)".

Woman, 40, Kyiv



“Work wasn’t being done, it got extended in time. Due to the cold at the office and the impossibility of heating everything with a generator, I was frequently ill”.

Woman, 57, Zaporizhia

“During blackouts, it was cold at my workplace without heating, and this interfered with my work”.

Man, 26, Kyiv

In addition to the negative impact on the conditions and organization of labor, air raid warnings, bombings and blackouts also made it **difficult for the respondents to commute to the companies and institutions they worked at**, and made work much harder for those whose jobs involved movement around the city or town.

“Major impact, because my work requires me to be in touch at least during the working hours, and due to sirens I can’t get to the destination on time, this introduces nervousness because it doesn’t cancel the tasks [...]”.

Woman, 51, Kyiv

“Blackouts make it more difficult to move around the city. I’m a bike delivery guy, and due to blackouts it gets more difficult for me to travel because traffic lights don’t work during that time. [...]”

Man, 20, village, Lviv Region

“Major impact, because my work requires me to constantly move around the city, and in the neighborhood where I live the subway stops during air raid warnings, so it’s a problem to get somewhere or return home. [...]”

Man, 43, Kyiv

Air raid warnings and bombings affected not only the organization of labor but also the **mental and emotional state of workers**. The respondents spoke about the anxiety and fear they felt during these moments.<sup>14</sup>

“Badly. [...] Air raid warnings barely affect us at all, we’re used to them. But bombings... We work in a place where there’s an industrial area behind us, there have been strikes less than a kilometer away, and there’s a port in front of us, same thing, and right next to us there’s a power plant! Missiles were intercepted above us the whole autumn and winter. But, thanks to our air defense, all of them were intercepted. But still, the workers are afraid. Glass in our windows shattered a long time ago, some we boarded up, some we’ve replaced. [...]”

Woman, 47, Odesa

“Unstable emotional state due to air raid warnings and missile strikes in which my acquaintances were killed. Our bosses think we rest at home, but in fact we work almost around the clock, I try to

<sup>14</sup> Read more about emotions and feelings in Part 4 “Feelings.”

justify that small wage, and I've almost stopped talking to my family and friends. I barely go outside and don't move properly".  
Woman, 54, town, Kharkiv Region

"[...] Air raid warnings and bombings have more impact, they make me very nervous, and it's hard to focus on work. Sometimes I can drop out of the working process for half a day".  
Woman, 44, Kyiv

The described difficulties and concerns that accompanied the respondents' work and negatively affected the conditions and organization of their labor, in turn, led to **reduced productivity**. The respondents reported that feelings of **exhaustion, difficulty concentrating, and constant stress** accompanied their work all the time.

"It's hard to concentrate on work, my mental state can't cope, work doesn't bring me satisfaction like it used to. But I work more and without vacations because the future is uncertain".  
Woman, 44, Kovel, Volyn Region

"I'm exhausted by the forced stays at the shelter, endless red tape paperwork which wasn't there before the war".  
Woman, 58, Kyiv

"My [...] work requires high concentration and constant focus which is almost impossible to achieve if there are blackouts every four hours. So my work sagged a lot during this time. As for bombings, this had a negative impact mostly on my general mental state. Both my colleagues and I agreed that after another missile strike and tragic events it's very difficult to focus on work, and the constant need to stay at the shelter was exhausting".  
Woman, 25, Brovary, Kyiv Region

"Blackouts significantly affected productivity. Even if there was enough electricity during the day, but it was turned off exactly during the hours when you felt productive, you lost motivation".  
Man, 23, Kyiv

With regard to the effectiveness of work, we should specifically mention the respondents working in education, who were well-represented in the sample of this wave of the study. School teachers and college professors, tutors and other respondents who provided education services privately emphasized not only the problems with their own productivity (both due to their mental state and due to the difficulties with organizing the teaching process during bombings, air raid warnings and blackouts, due to their increased workload). In their answers, they also pointed out that studying had become less effective, and that their students had difficulties with learning the material.

"I work at education institutions, and this [bombings, air raid sirens, blackouts] affects the education process very negatively. The education process moves much more slowly and with more difficulty".

Woman, 30, Kyiv

"It's hard to work with a hundred percent commitment during an air raid alarm. I'm a school teacher. The kids study poorly. It's not a proper quality education. There's three times as much work now".

Woman, 53, Kyiv

"[...] I work at a college with temporary remote learning, so blackouts really harm my work with the students: in rural areas, the internet is very dependent on electricity. [...] Everyone ignores air raid warnings (I promise, I don't force anyone to stay online for the class during an air raid siren), so they don't really affect things. But the shelling of villages near the border is another matter. It's much more impactful. Students go down into their cellars during shelling. Actually, the quality of knowledge has fallen a lot. Both due to communication difficulties and due to lack of discipline. Many have moved abroad and are finishing their studies in Ukrainian universities just for the diploma. You can really feel it".

Woman, 35, Sumy

In general, the answers of the respondents involved in education revealed a rather strong sense of high responsibility not only for the results of their work but also for the wellbeing of the students they worked with. Their answers (including answers to other survey questions) show that this increased the levels of stress which the respondents experienced at work. Similar emotional distress could also be observed in the answers of respondents working in preschool education and in health care, because they were directly responsible for the lives of the people in their care at work.

"I work at a hospital, during air raid warnings we have to evacuate the kids (patients), which is stressful because many of them are seriously ill, and some refuse to stay at the shelter. [...]"

Woman, 26, Kyiv

"I work as a preschool teacher online, the kids really lack communication".

Woman, 63, Dnipro

"It's very difficult to deal with preschoolers during air raid warnings. Although our shelter is very safe, it's a limited space. So the kids can endure up to an hour, and then they need to run around, move around a bit. We had a few cases when as a result of missile strikes, not only power [...] but also internet and cell connection was cut off, public transit wasn't running. It's dark outside, there's no contact with their parents, and the kids get anxious, start crying. [...]"

Woman, 56, Lviv

In one way or another, a significant share of the respondents **managed to adapt** to the negative effects of the war and **organize their working routine in these conditions**.

First of all, it could be said that people have gotten used to the war in a way. A year since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, constant air raid sirens and, in the case of some cities, even constant missile strikes have become a part of daily routine for many people.

As we can see from the answers, for many this adjustment meant **ignoring air raid warnings**. Some did it on their own accord, and for others their employer did not provide the opportunity to go down into a shelter.

"In the past half a year, we stopped reacting to the sirens: we continue working and studying. [...]"

Woman, 33, Odesa

"We no longer pay attention to the air raid sirens, we're used to them".

Woman, 42, Kharkiv

"[...] Right now my city does not experience bombing, but when there were some, we had to make a choice: to stop working or to work and think about the danger at the same time and about the fact that fragments or a missile can fall on your head. I've even gotten used to this, I work during air raid warnings".

Woman, 51, Kyiv

"I'm an employee, air raid sirens don't affect my work because my company ignores them".

Woman, 27, Chornomorsk, Odesa Region

Secondly, the respondents took certain **active steps** to ensure their ability to work despite the impact of these negative circumstances or to minimize this impact. The main strategies were more or less obvious: **changing the approach to organizing one's working time, purchasing various devices which enabled people to work during blackouts or problems with the internet**, and looking for a place where work can be done more productively.

As we mentioned above, a significant share of the respondents admitted that they had to work at night. This was the only way for them to complete all of their work tasks, because blackouts during the day and/or forced stays at bomb shelters without the ability to work there significantly interfered with their work. So a general practice for most respondents who tried to reorganize their time was to work when there was power and

to do other tasks (for example, household chores that did not require electricity) or rest during blackouts. A number of the respondents said that they tried to divide their work tasks into those which required electricity and those which could be done without power or internet.

"Blackouts have a significant impact, but I've adjusted. I do the accounting and reports while taking into account the blackout schedules. Air raid sirens and bombings harm me only emotionally".

Woman, 56, Zaporizhia

"I'm a teacher, remote learning, it's impossible to have classes when there is no power, so I arrange with my students to have classes during evening hours. [...]"

Woman, 55, Cherkasy

"[...] Long blackouts had the biggest effect, that is, the lack of internet [...]. But... I comforted myself by thinking that it's all temporary, and I did the work which could be done without a laptop or internet. The same goes for the air raid warnings. But there were cases when we had access to the internet and electricity in bomb shelters, and we worked from there. [...]"

Woman, 25, town, Rivne Region

Some respondents even noted that the experience of organizing their work and/or the work of their subordinates in these unfavorable circumstances, in their opinion, indirectly helped improve the efficiency of planning and the use of time.

"Blackouts have taught me to structure my work better and rotate tasks which require being online and tasks which can be done offline. [...]"

Woman, 44, Kyiv

"I've learned to adapt, to use time more rationally".

Woman, 40, Lviv

In addition to changing their approaches to organizing work, the respondents also bought various devices and appliances which allowed them to use their electric equipment autonomously during blackouts and gave them access to the internet in these circumstances.

"In autumn, [the impact of blackouts] almost paralyzed my online work (I teach at a university), it made me spend a lot of money on power banks and electricity substitutes, increased my feelings of anxiety".

Man, 42, Nizhyn, Chernihiv Region

"Since we solved the issue of internet connection and laptop charging using batteries, the only effect was that when there was no power, the phone connection was poor. [...]"

Woman, 29, Odesa

"Blackouts do not affect my work directly, because back in mid-autumn I ensured the autonomy of my power supply and connection. [...]"

Man, 36, Lviv

"During the blackouts I tried to work as much as I could, I bought a charging station and got a cable internet connection which works without power. [...]"

Woman, 27, Kyiv

However, a lot of people could not afford to buy expensive devices for autonomous work. Many respondents in the previous wave of the survey mentioned that they could not afford to buy a generator for their family. However, the answers show that at least for a small share of the respondents the situation was improved by the fact that generators and other devices were bought for their office. In this case, the main task for the respondents was to get to their office or workplace where the necessary working conditions had already been provided.

"Air raid warnings and bombings can delay the completion of work tasks. Blackouts do not affect us, my employers did everything to prevent it from stopping me".

Woman, 33, village, Kyiv Region

"I work at a large private clinic, and for us, seemingly nothing has changed: we've bought a few powerful generators. The only thing is that the employees can't ride the elevator now, only the patients can".

Woman, 29, Odesa

"The company I work for has bought batteries, air raid warnings interrupt my commute".

Woman, 46, Kherson

Inability to ensure proper conditions for working from home and the lack of such conditions at their office encouraged both self-employed people and employees to look for the necessary conditions elsewhere.

The respondents mostly **traveled within their city** looking for a cafe or a coworking space with a generator, or for a place located in a neighborhood with a different blackout schedule. Some respondents worked from the houses of their family or friends.

"I'm a freelancer, so I had to travel around with my laptop in search of places with electricity and internet. But my workload isn't very big. [...]"

Woman, 36, Toretsk, Donetsk Region

"[I'm] an individual entrepreneur. I rented a coworking space with a generator, looked for a cafe with electricity, or went to my relatives or friends who had electricity. [...]"

Woman, 36, Kyiv

"Blackouts have a significant impact because all of my work is online. To ensure connection, I had to literally run around the city looking for a spot to work online. [...]"

Man, 56, Kharkiv

Some respondents said that it was the unstable situation with power supply that forced them to **move, either to other Ukrainian cities or abroad**. For some, this temporary relocation was provided by their employer.

"I couldn't work without power in Kyiv. The lack of blackout schedules, lack of water in December–January forced me to move out of the city".

Man, 31, Kyiv

"I work as an online English tutor, so I can't work when there's no power, because mobile internet can't cope in Kyiv when there's no power. The situation in Yaremche is better. Right now, everything is mostly stable. But the blackouts and the lack of electricity for 50 hours straight was the thing that caused me to move".

Woman, 24, Kyiv

"[...] In late November, I moved abroad for three months. My company organized a program for their employees to stay abroad for the winter in order to cancel the risks of power supply interruptions for our clients".

Woman, 24



## 2.2 ● Professional development and career

In the previous wave of the study, the respondents mentioned that they were concerned about many issues related to work and professional development: lack of jobs, low pay, difficulties with finding a job that matches their qualifications, and lack of opportunities for self-realization. So in this wave of the study we decided to ask how the respondents' ideas about their profession and work had changed since the beginning of the full-scale invasion.<sup>15</sup>

A rather prominent tendency among the study participants was the difficulty of thinking about the future, and therefore **difficulties with planning and thinking about changing their career or profession**. Some respondents said that the understanding of their further professional development will be clearer after the war ends.

"I'm practically unable to think about professional development or career. What for, if in the near future I'll have to fight in the war, and if I'm lucky to survive, later I will still have to build everything from scratch".

Man, 36, Kyiv

"I feel uncertain about what I am going to do, but it's not 100% due to the invasion. After burning out in my old profession, I try to feel my way through to figure out what to do next. Uncertainty increases because I don't know where I'm going to live, in Europe or in Ukraine, and because of this I don't understand where to look for self-actualization".

Woman, 37, Kyiv

"I used to be confident in my professional future. Now I have various fears. Related to inflation and the blackouts situation (right now this aspect is fine, but there's still the option that it will get worse again)".

Woman, 34, Dnipro

"Before the war, I was a relatively successful entrepreneur, and now I'm an employee with a small wage. There are disadvantages and advantages. I can't really see the future. It's unlikely that I'd be able to restore my business".

Man, 49, Mariupol

Some respondents noted that they expected problems in their work due to **possible layoffs or low remuneration**.

<sup>15</sup> Question formulation: "Since the beginning of the full-scale war, how have your ideas about how you see the future of your job/occupation changed?"



"Sad prospects, lowering wages, increasing bureaucratic pressure".

Woman, Kyiv

"There's always demand for my profession, and especially since the beginning of the war. I'm not worried about that. I'm more concerned about the capacity to pay for my work".

Man, 44, Kharkiv

"I have a great desire to keep my profession, but there's a fear that due to the lack of budget funding there can be major layoffs in our organization".

Woman, 55, Kyiv

In response to questions about the future, the respondents also deliberated about the relevance of their own occupation. Some of them believed that **their profession was relevant regardless of the war, and some professions had become even more relevant**. Unfortunately, not all of the respondents who said this mentioned what their profession was. But among those who clarified what they do, education, medical, construction, and banking workers believed their jobs to be relevant.

"My profession as a psychologist is needed by more people. I work and I realize that I must work more and better. I'm learning techniques for coping with stress and PTSD prevention among the victims of war".

Woman, 59, Kyiv

"My occupation (architect) was not needed at the beginning of the big war, I didn't work in my profession for 10 months. I helped volunteers, weaved masking nets, worked at a factory, sorted humanitarian aid. After the war, we will need to restore destroyed cities, people will need housing, so my profession will be useful. We're already designing housing for the displaced people. [...]"

Woman, 46, Dnipro

"I work as an electrician servicing apartment buildings, the blackouts have made my work a bit more difficult. This is one of the eternal professions which no robots will ever be able to replace. So I'm confident in its future".

Man, 65, Zmiyiv, Kharkiv Region

"Working at school is an eternal profession. My work is practically always needed. The kids who've moved abroad need help from a tutor. So I'm going to have work".

Woman, 53, Kyiv

Notably, the respondents who worked in **culture or the humanitarian field, on the contrary, said** that they did not see any relevance in their work during the war. Some of them expressed doubt that even after the war their professions would be relevant, while others, in contrast, hoped that they

would be able to resume their work in full in the postwar period.

“Most importantly, Victory should come, and demand for my profession (director) will grow. Although we’ve already started rehearsals. As charity work, for now”.

Man, 47, town, Mykolayiv Region

“It’s scary to realize and accept that my profession as a screenwriter will not be very relevant in the next 3–5 years. Government funding will be spent on restoring the infrastructure and so on, and by no means on filmmaking”.

Woman, 20, Kyiv

“I started thinking that nobody needs my art, so it’s impossible to monetize. Now I realize that I’d have difficulties with work even without the war”.

Woman, 22, Lviv

A certain share of the respondents noted that they **were considering their options to change their job or occupation**. The key reasons they mentioned included the opportunity to earn more, the desire to change their profession in general or change it for a more relevant one which would allow them to find a job quickly, the opportunity to work remotely. Some study participants had already started to do something for it—for instance, to master a new profession or new skills—while others were trying to look for another job. A number of those who were trying to do it said that it was hard for them to find a job. At the same time, some respondents noted that they were planning to change their profession only after the full-scale war ended.

“I need to change my profession, look for something where it’s easier to find a job. In Ukraine, according to my friends, there are the same problems: nobody needs creative people”.

Woman, 35, Dnipro

“I realize that I should work at jobs where salaries are tied to the dollar/euro”.

Woman, 30, Kyiv

There were also study participants who had already changed their job within their own profession or decided to change their occupation during the full-scale invasion. Those who had completely changed their occupation did it for various reasons. Some had **changed their profession for a more “practical” one** without clarifying what they meant by it. There were also respondents who, on the contrary, decided to change their profession for a more creative one because they had “wanted to do it for a long time.” Some realized that their profession did

not suit them or they did not like it, and they started to search for their place in a different occupation.

It is important to note that these answers demonstrate two trends: 1) wanting to **change one's profession for one which they actually like** due to the desire to realize one's wishes in view of the war; 2) wanting to **change one's profession for one that will be useful to society** or which will allow one to donate money.

"It has changed several times. I still feel lost in this regard. I lost my job, then I thought I'd find a new one quickly, but I realized that I had no energy to do it. I decided to give myself time and work a physical job for a while, which I did for about half a year. Now I'm returning to intellectual work, but I realize that I'll have to determine a new direction of development (before the war, I wanted to go study to become a cinematographer, but now I don't consider it to be relevant). I also want to be useful for the victory. Either make enough to be able to donate significant amounts, or work directly for that purpose".

Woman, 29, Kyiv

"Before the war, I started to learn a programming language, and during the war I realized it wasn't my thing at all. Creative professions suit me more, as well as jobs where I'd be able to apply my soft skills, so now I sometimes send my CVs to agencies looking for project managers for interesting projects".

Woman, 22, Kyiv

"Yes, radically. I quit my job in business and started working in art (as I had wanted to before). But given the realities of the war, tomorrow may never come, so there's no point in delaying the realization of your dreams and desires".

Woman, 27, Kyiv

Some respondents noted that after the beginning of the full-scale invasion, they felt a **change of priorities and values regarding their jobs**. In particular, some study participants had changed their job because it did not sit well with their values. The desire to be useful for Ukraine was important for a significant share of the respondents, so some of those who lived abroad sought to work in projects related to Ukraine.

"I quit in January because the war had intensified the negative processes in the environment, I was working in. Plus the war sharpened my value-oriented perspective. I could not tolerate unethical things while people are giving their lives for this country".

Woman, 42, Kyiv

"The feeling that my values are important to me has sharpened, and my main job does not match them".

Woman, 28, Lisbon

"I started undertaking more responsibility. I'm more picky about the projects I take on. Now I see myself primarily through my Ukrainian identity".

Woman, 43, Kyiv

"I only want career development in projects which are related to Ukraine in some way, I've even refused promotion because that would mean abandoning my work in a project that helps Ukrainian cultural institutions".

Woman, 29, Berlin

A number of study participants said that they did not know what the development of their career would be in the future, because, according to them, **they were experiencing a professional crisis and/or burnout.**

"I'm frustrated. The expectation is that I'd quit my work as a manager for Ukrainian projects, find a job in Germany, and then return home when it's safer. But there, because of the pause, I'd no longer be the same specialist, and it'd look bad that I left the country. In the end, it will all be a decline rather than growth for some time".

Woman, 28, Kyiv

"I've lost the thirst for learning and academic work, although I saw myself in this. I have no desire whatsoever to achieve anything, and I don't see any attractive career for myself. I have no idea what kind of professional future I need".

Woman, 20, Kyiv

"I've realized I don't want to work. At least right now I'm experiencing a crisis in my professional work. I force myself to work because I need to support my family. I hope that when the circumstances change, I'll be able to reevaluate and change something. Either I'll develop internal resources and my work will start to bring me joy again, or I'll find another job, or I don't know... Time will tell".

Woman, 27, Kyiv

Some respondents noted that the need for workforce had either already increased or, in their opinion, **would increase significantly in the future.** This is probably associated with their belief that there will be more demand for work in the future due to the restoration and reconstruction of Ukraine in the postwar period.

The respondents also articulated general thoughts about work and career growth in the postwar period. Some believed that they would have no problems with employment because their professions would be important in the context of rebuilding (construction, energy, psychology). The study participants also expressed hope that after the end of the war, the economic

situation would improve, and there would be more opportunities to find a job.

"I hope that the social sphere will develop more and offer jobs and decent salaries".

Woman, 20, Mariupol

"In my hometown, I was the head of a district NGO for 22 years, and after the victory I will do the same thing, help families with many children, people with disabilities, families who have lost family members at war, participate in various humanitarian and environmental projects".

Man, 73, village, Kharkiv Region

"The future after the end of the war seems not bad, because my job is related to energy, and after the victory, I think there will be a lot of work in this field".

Woman, 39, Kharkiv

"I need to survive until enterprises will start working in the country, new factories start launching. Then everything will get better".

Woman, 54, village, Poltava Region

It should be noted that for a number of the respondents, their thoughts about their professional development in the future did not change at all, and they were not considering the possibility of changing their occupation or job.

"First I felt like I should go into another field, maybe even a cashier at a supermarket or a janitor. To do something useful and have guaranteed income. Then new orders came in, and regular work in my usual field. It sorted itself out within 9 months".

Woman, 38, Kyiv

## Part 3 ● Everyday life and routines

The previous wave of the study coincided with the beginning of massive Russian attacks on the Ukrainian energy system. This resulted in regular blackouts. Russian attacks also led to a lack of water supply and heating. We asked the respondents how their everyday life and routines<sup>16</sup> had changed in November 2022–March 2023.

During these months, the situation with power supply varied across the country. In their answers to this question, some respondents compared the situation in February–March to November and wrote that “it has gotten better,” “easier.” This is related to the fact that there were fewer mass missile attacks in February 2023, which allowed Ukraine to establish uninterrupted or almost uninterrupted power supply. Thus, many people’s everyday life started to look like their life before the beginning of the massive attacks on the energy system.

“I live in Kyiv, right now everything seems to be back to normal here, electricity is uninterrupted, so we’ve started using it more compared to November, and in other aspects nothing has changed”.

Non-binary person, 21, Kyiv

“Practically nothing [has changed], but since blackouts have stopped, it’s now much easier psychologically and I have more time for studying”.

Man, 23, Kyiv

In this and the previous wave of the study, the respondents’ experiences in terms of everyday life and routines in the situation of the lack of power supply were similar. The study participants noted that it was harder for them to organize their routines because they had to plan their tasks during the day with account for the power supply schedule.

In the previous wave of the study, the respondents mentioned stockpiling food and water to prepare for the winter. In this wave, the study participants reported similar experiences of preparing for the winter period. They had bought power banks, charging stations, electric stoves, batteries, flashlights, LED light chains, battery-powered lamps, candles, vacuum flasks; they also installed fiber-optic cables to ensure their access to the internet during blackouts.

“We’ve made stocks of drinking and household water. A more thought-through stockpile of food, taking into account the potential lack of water/power. We’ve bought LED chains and power

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<sup>16</sup> Question formulation: “How have your everyday life and routines changed in the past three months (from November until today)?”



banks. All family members use power much more sparingly. The kids started going to school offline”.

Woman, 37, Boryspil, Kyiv Region

“When the blackouts started in early November, it was very difficult, because there could be no power in my city and neighborhood for several days straight. Our apartment has electric heating, an electric stove. So at first we could neither cook, nor get warm, nor work. Since we work from home, we traveled around the city in search of an internet connection. It was all very depressing, but we got together with friends a lot, and that improved our moods. I spent the whole December abroad, and when I got back, my husband had already established the routines: he bought a portable gas cooker, an Ecoflow, solved the internet issue, found a bright lamp which we connected to a battery. So even the frequent blackouts no longer affected our everyday life and moods that much. Now there are barely any blackouts anymore, so our life resembles normal life”.

Woman, 29, Odesa

In addition, the adjustments in everyday life depended on the kind of cooker each household had: gas or electric. The respondents who had a gas cooker were able to cook and warm up food without a power supply.

Even though the blackouts had stopped, some people continued to follow the habits they developed during the blackouts. For example, they checked the battery charges of their devices and the availability of electricity, reduced their power consumption by using electric devices less. In addition, some respondents got used to doing their tasks faster and “avoid postponing things for later, do what you can do right here and now.” Some answers mentioned household chores in particular: cleaning, laundry, etc.

“I learned to do all the things that used to take me the whole day within the two hours when there is electricity”.

Woman, 54, Makariv, Kyiv Region

“I use electric appliances less. Even now, when there are no more blackouts. The habit has stayed with me”.

Woman, 30, Zaporizhia

Some respondents moved to other regions within the country or abroad due to the problems with power supply.

“I’ve moved from Kyiv to Yaremche, so my everyday life has changed significantly. The main reason for moving were problems with the power supply and internet in Kyiv. It made my work impossible. [...]”

Woman, 24, Kyiv

**The respondents who had school children in their care** found it more difficult to organize the study process due to the lack of power and internet. Care for preschoolers required constant access to warm water and food. The respondents noted that when there were interruptions in the power and water supply, this had become difficult. Due to the fact that elevators were off during blackouts, it had become much more difficult to go for walks with prams.

"It was hard to live without electricity during the day, I'm on maternity leave, my kid is 1.7 years old, so I need water, heating and power, especially in winter. Every day I collected a lot of water in all the containers in the house. The situation got much better in February—finally there's electricity 24/7!"

Woman, 37, village, Vinnytsia Region

"[...] I have twins. It was impossible to take the pram downstairs from the seventh floor without an elevator. We kept a part of the pram in the car trunk. It was very hard to wait out the evening blackouts, because we also have an older boy of 4 for whom we had to come up with entertainment for that time".

Woman, 34, Vinnytsia

One of the key spheres of human life is **paid employment**, so a part of the respondents emphasized the changes that had happened in their professional lives while describing their everyday lives.<sup>17</sup> Some respondents had resumed offline work at the office because there was electricity there. One of the respondents said that her employers organized her relocation from Ukraine to another country so that she could work with uninterrupted access to electricity.

Just like during the previous waves of the study, a number of the respondents said that their everyday lives **were affected by bombings and air raid warnings**. Some respondents noted that massive missile strikes "ruined" their everyday life by making it impossible for them to do the things they planned. Other study participants, on the contrary, reported that they had started to view air raid warnings as a "normal" part of their everyday lives.

"[...] We monitored the causes of the warnings. Over time, the sirens have started to cause less fear, and missile strikes have become a part of our everyday lives. A routine. We expected them, as if on schedule".

Woman, 22, Kyiv

"My work is now 90% remote. When there are mass missile strikes, all the tasks instantly recede into the background".

Woman, 27, Kyiv

<sup>17</sup> Read more about the impact of the war on work in Part 2 "Work."

The towns and cities where some respondents lived were **liberated**, which affected their everyday lives: businesses opened, humanitarian aid started to arrive.

"We were liberated from occupation. Freedom, without Russians. Banks, stores, all the services are working, there's a lot of humanitarian aid".

Woman, 62, Kherson

"Our community was liberated half a year ago. Starting from November and until today, our everyday lives have gradually started to resume, although constant bombings and the threat of re-occupation have their effects. Volunteer work saves me from depression, but by now I'm starting to feel a light devastation".

Man, 31, Kupyansk, Kharkiv Region

The respondents who lived **abroad** at the moment of filling out the questionnaire spoke about their adaptation in other countries. The study participants who had moved abroad recently said that they had begun to learn the local language, and those who had been abroad for a while shared that they had mastered a certain level of language proficiency. In addition, the everyday lives of the respondents who lived abroad were affected by changes in their living conditions and by employment.

"[...] I'm starting to understand the language of the country I'm in (Germany) [...]".

Woman, 25, Kharkiv

"[...] I had to get used to everything, figure it out, adjust. In addition, I don't speak Spanish, and English isn't of much help here. I'm learning Spanish [...]".

Woman, 26, Kyiv

"I'm still abroad... In December, we were gifted furniture, and now I sleep on a nice bed, not a mattress... I have a closet, a chest of drawers and other nice comforts)"

Woman, 47, Vinnytsia

"Radically: on October 28, 2022, I arrived in Berlin as a refugee from the war. I lived at the refugee center for two months, where only a bed on the second floor was mine. I was severely ill for a month, now I've been living at a hostel for two months from which all the Ukrainians are being evicted. I have no everyday routine. No health. My everyday life was bureaucratic red tape before I got ill. [...]"

Woman, 32, Shepetivka, Khmelnytsky Region

The study participants noted that their everyday lives and routines in November–March were affected by their **emotional**

**state.**<sup>18</sup> The result of this was the difficulty of establishing a routine and organizing household chores, such as cooking.

“Exhaustion, it feels like you’re running a marathon but there’s no finish line. I don’t feel like doing anything at all in the household”.  
Woman, 44, Kyiv

Just like in the previous waves of the study, some respondents reported **financial difficulties**. They noted that their income had decreased, food had become more expensive, and their everyday expenses had increased.

Some study participants shared that their partners had joined the AFU. This increased their own workload and the workload of their family members in terms of housework and care work.

“My husband is mobilized: he found where he could be useful with his profession and health and went to fight as a volunteer. Accordingly, my life has changed a lot, and now everything is on me: work, household chores, children and all the related issues. We can no longer share the tasks, when one of us takes the kid to a doctor and the other deals with the specialist who checks the utility meters, I’m the one who has to find the time for everything. The family income has also fallen significantly: my husband’s pay in the army is much lower than his salary, there are many expenses related to equipping him, and I can’t work in full because I have many routine chores”.  
Woman, 47, Kyiv

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<sup>18</sup> Read more about the impact of the war on emotional states in Part 4 “Feelings.”

## Part 4 ● Feelings

Just like in the previous waves of the survey, we asked the respondents to evaluate their own emotional state.<sup>19</sup> The answers reveal several key trends.

First of all, in February–March 2023, the respondents were quite likely to share **feelings of an existential nature, regarding the past, the future, the meaning of life and of their work**. Such answers were often full of **reflection on the fact that the war had already been going on for a year; the questions of fundamental values were also often raised** (primarily of fairness).

Just like earlier, especially in the first two waves of the survey in spring 2022, the respondents' answers demonstrated **longing and grief for the past** which had been lost: one's home, one's life (the respondents recalled the positive moments of their lives, people, activities and things that were important to them). The respondents grieved both the personal things they lost (for instance, their lost plans which were no longer possible to implement, the time when their family lived together, their destroyed apartment, etc.) and the social things: they were missing Ukraine which would never be the same as before the war, their city which would never look the same after missile strikes, their community (colleagues or neighbors who would never return). The core feeling was the sense of irreparable loss and the unfairness of that loss—maybe that was why the respondents sometimes used the adjective “lost,” like in the previous waves.

“Frustration, shame, hope and memories. I think about returning home and how I can't do it right now. [...] I can't fully accept the fact that I've lost my previous life. I'm ashamed of being sad; being sad even though I actually have an OK life, I live in comfortable conditions”.

Woman, 28, Kyiv

“I feel better than during the first 6 months after evacuation—back then it was total depression. [...] The environment I'm in is alien to me, and I feel alienated from the country and the people, unwilling to discover it or be interested. [...] I feel a lot of sadness and grief for the life before February 24 which I've lost”.

Woman, 37, Kyiv

“I'm scared. Work saves me. I try to continue making plans for the future. I don't control the situation. It's horrible. It's hard to keep the balance between anger and feeling sorry for myself. [...] I keep thinking about how well we used to live. I feel sorry for not

<sup>19</sup> Question formulation: “How do you feel now? Please describe your state, emotions, and feelings.”

dedicating enough time to my loved ones and myself, so I try not to postpone anything, because tomorrow may never come”.

Woman, 43, Kharkiv

In this wave, however, the experience of negative emotions related to the future has come to the forefront. Whereas during the first waves, such strong emotions as **despair**, **hopelessness** were related specifically to the loss of the past, in February–March 2023 we could observe that the respondents **were more and more likely to feel these emotions while thinking about the future**. They could describe it as “lost,” “stolen,” “ruined,” “taken away.”

“[...] Sometimes it seems like the war will always continue, there is no way out, and the country’s future is ruined. In the past few months, I’ve even sometimes had thoughts about the “peaceful solution,” negotiations for the enemy’s benefit, just so all of this is finally over. [...] The inability to plan anything is very exhausting. [...] Sometimes I feel anger, but more often powerlessness and despair. I grieve the potential future which the war has taken away from me. I really want to have a child in the next few years, and I’m scared about the world I’m going to bring them into, whether they’d ever be safe at all”.

Woman, 30, Kharkiv

“It’s very sad that some people are dying while others continue to live and have fun. I really don’t like that corruption is still flourishing. I have no faith in Ukraine’s future. I feel despair over the pointlessness of all the sacrifice”.

Woman, 43, Lviv

The respondents **shared the feeling of losing direction in life, their goals, the purpose of their life and work**. They said that they did not understand how to continue living. “**Confusion**,” “**uncertainty**,” “**helplessness**” were very widespread in the answers of the respondents in this wave, especially those who gave a brief answer to this question.

“I’m frankly feeling bad. Because I see no prospects. I feel unprotected. No strength. I live by inertia”.

Woman, 46, Mariupol

“No purpose, I’m not sure about the usefulness of what I do”.

Human, 46, Kramatorsk

“Right now, calmness. In a week, it can be anything—joy, sadness, despair, hope, horror, sorrow, apprehension, and sometimes fear for the future, the feeling of uselessness of everything”.

Woman, 41, village, Kyiv Region

“Bad. I want to cry, but I can’t. I argue with my family. Everything seems meaningless”.

Woman, 34, Vinnytsia



Some respondents directly reached the **question of the meaning of life** in their deliberations about their goals and direction.

"It's unclear what's the meaning of my life if I'm not on the frontline, not volunteering, and not doing anything useful apart from donations for the army and humanitarian aid. But I have no bravery or resolve to go to the frontline, and no skills either, fighting or medical. But most importantly, I don't have the courage even remotely, and I'm concerned about how to live if you can't find it within yourself, when so many people were able to do it to preserve my life. [...]"

Woman, 23, Kyiv

"Constant anxiety for my loved ones, my husband, the future. My spine conditions have been aggravated due to lack of mobility. Is there a point in continuing life..."

Woman, 54, town, Kharkiv Region

"Depressed, I'm losing the meaning in my work and activities. I feel lonely, alone in the evenings. There is no leisure of some kind".

Man, 32, Kharkiv

In addition to the feeling of losing faith/hope for the best ("hopelessness," "despondency"), the despair in the respondents' thoughts about the future was also related to the **feeling of their own powerlessness**, loss of agency, of the ability to influence the course of events in the country, the war, and their own life, **the feeling of loss of control** and, like during the previous waves, **the unpredictability of events and difficulties with planning**. The answers demonstrated rather negative predictions about the potential future (about how exactly the war would end, what the country would be like after the war—in particular, what was going to happen to the economy). All of this caused the respondents to feel not only despair but also strong fear.

"[My state] is unstable, like everyone's, the day starts with the news and ends with the news, I often feel like crying because it's impossible to dream about anything, plan anything, because our life, present and future, depends on that asshole".

Woman, 60, Rivne

"It's been very hard for me the past three months, but then I found a free group therapy for refugees, and it got easier. There's a lot of feeling of the lack of control over my life, sometimes I descend into hopelessness".

Woman, 35, Dnipro

"Lost, almost in a stupor, I can't imagine how I'll survive if we don't win this year".

Woman, 50, Znamyanka, Kirovohrad Region

"Major anxiety, sirens wailing in my head even when there's no air raid warning. I cry often, I feel very sorry for the kids, they don't deserve this. Sometimes anger: why? Sometimes apathy: what is everything for if nothing depends on you?"

Woman, 44, Kovel, Volyn Region

"Sad and exhausted. Too many things I can't change, I just need to accept them. It's both hard and makes me sad".

Man, 28, Kyiv

"I'm scared. I feel powerless to influence the situation in any way. I categorically don't want to leave my home. But I feel pangs of conscience for not thinking about my child's future first of all and not going abroad, but staying home because here I have my husband, dog, cats, and my whole life".

Woman, 35, Zhytomyr

In general, this wave of the survey reveals a **rather high level of reflection in the answers** of the respondents who tried to make sense of the entire year of the full-scale war which had passed, the changes in their worldview, to think about the fundamental human values. This could have been indirectly caused by the fact that the survey was conducted on the anniversary of the beginning of the full-scale war.

"Emotionally exhausted. I'm tired of the cruelty and anger around me. It's hard to accept that the world and people are really as cruel as we see right now".

Man, 26, Kyiv

"I want to finally start to trust the government. The war has reconciled me with death, but it hasn't reconciled me with injustice".

Man, 47, Mykolayiv

"On the anniversary of the war I felt depressed, the stress of this whole year came over me. You start reflecting and realizing the scale of disaster that's going on, while in everyday life you don't always have the time to think about that".

Woman, 27, Kyiv

Another trend which we could clearly observe in the respondents' answer, just like in the previous wave, was the **widespread chronic stress and chronic exhaustion**. In addition, the respondents' answers show that stress and exhaustion **were more and more likely to manifest as problems with sleep (such as sleep disorders, insomnia, drowsiness during the day, not feeling rested after sleep, etc.)**.

"Worries for ordinary soldiers. For their provision, health, life. I'm feeling worse. I can't sleep for long. I wake up every 1.5–2 hours, and after sudden sounds".

Woman, 61, village, Kharkiv Region

"Worse sleep, troubles with my heart".

Man, 58, Pavlohrad, Dnipropetrovsk Region

"Constant tension, stress, insomnia, fear of loud sounds".

Woman, 48, Mykolayiv

"I have chronic depression (I was diagnosed with depressive anxiety disorder even before the full-scale war, and some symptoms have gotten much worse during the full-scale war). In the past three months, I actually felt the worst in the past year. First of all, I've been very exhausted by insomnia (just in this period, I've tried four prescription sleeping pills, and none of them helped). [...]"

Woman, 29, Irpin, Kyiv Region

The war-related exhaustion and stress led not only to sleep problems but also **to other health problems**. The respondents who gave extended answers about their worsening health were the most likely to speak about the problems which, in their opinion, were associated to the experience of stress (such as hand tremor, weakness, drowsiness, pain in various body parts) and about the aggravation of chronic conditions and health problems they had even before the war.

"My health has gotten worse due to age, lack of medicines in the first months of the war, and constant tension".

Man, 59, Boryspil, Kyiv Region

"Sometimes I'm overwhelmed with despair because it's hard to deal with everything in the conditions of uncertainty. My body reacts in the worst way, some kind of constant psychosomatic symptoms (weakness, headaches, muscle ache, frequent colds). [...]"

Woman, 32, Kyiv

"I've been through a very strong downturn, maybe with elements of depression, when the decision was made about my husband's mobilization. I was aware that it was heading there, we discussed it a lot together, I thought I was ready, but I reacted unexpectedly strongly. I felt mental depression, anxiety, apathy, and constant feeling of tiredness, my chronic conditions exacerbated, I developed problems with blood pressure and tachycardia, constantly felt cold, had digestion disorders, problems with my back... [...]"

Woman, 47, Kyiv

Just like earlier, chronic exhaustion and stress led to **the deterioration of memory and other cognitive capacities, reduced productivity and reduced capacity to concentrate on**

**work or studies.** The respondents who had these problems often wrote that they “forced themselves to work” or that they lingered over one task for a long time. Just like before, chronic stress manifested as inability to feel rested even after a pause in their work, which, in turn, could lead to physical exhaustion and illnesses.

“My current state is best described with the word “exhaustion.” A kind of total exhaustion on the verge of depression, when all you want to do is sleep and you have no energy for anything. I feel like I only work by superhuman effort, and I’m not hibernating only because I have a daughter who needs my participation. [...]”

Woman, 35, Kyiv

“I feel good enough in the moment. The past few days, I’ve been sleeping enough, eating regularly, generally understanding my emotions, in good contact with my loved ones. In the mid-term perspective, I feel like I need a rest, because I’ve reached the stage when I’m getting illnesses due to the impossibility of resting”.

Woman, 37, Kyiv

“I often feel emotionally exhausted. My health has gotten worse. Problems with memory. I’m afraid of dropping down and being a burden for my kids in this difficult time when they need my support”.

Woman, 60, village, Poltava Region

“Tiredness, a bit of apathy, slowed down cognitive abilities, because I don’t immediately get what’s what”.

Woman, 44, Kyiv

In the conditions of chronic tiredness and exhaustion, **the respondents also said that they had no energy to communicate and tended to isolate themselves.** Compared to the November survey, the answers of this kind had become somewhat more prevalent.

“The feeling of anxiety and irritability has become usual, the feelings of safety or calmness are almost completely absent. I often avoid talking to people outside of my family. Insomnia also can’t give me a break”.

Man, 31, Kupyansk, Kharkiv Region

“The mood is depressed. I only want to talk to my closest ones, I don’t have enough energy resources for others. My dog supports me. Frequent apathy”.

Woman, 53, Kyiv

“In the past month I’ve been feeling apathy, earlier I lacked communication, and now I don’t even want it”.

Woman, 36, Poltava

“I’ve started to like being alone more”.

Man, 47, town, Mykolayiv Region

The third key trend in the respondents' emotional feelings in this wave of the survey was a kind of **“transformation” in their emotional management strategies.**

In all the previous waves of the survey, starting from the first weeks of the full-scale war, the respondents shared that they purposefully tried to suppress their emotions or, on the contrary, to feel certain emotions; they spoke about the difficulties associated with this. These acts of emotional management could have targeted either public displays of emotion only, or the correction of one's own internal feelings as well. In March, the respondents also mentioned employing these tactics, particularly to **“keep up the appearances”** in front of their colleagues or avoid upsetting their children, elderly parents, or partners serving in the AFU.

“Physically [I feel] generally normal. I also try to keep my emotions and feelings within the norm, because my husband's safety on the frontline depends on my exchange of emotions with him”.

Woman, 38, Kyiv

“A bit scared, but we don't show it. What's the point of scaring the kids?”

Woman, 63, Kyiv

“Right now I'm in constant stress, anxious and in despair. Publicly I hold up well, but when I return home, I cry almost constantly”.

Woman, 38, village, Kyiv Region

“Everything is black and white. With a flavor of ash. I constantly want to cry, but I must endure it and restrain myself”.

Woman, 36, Izium, Kharkiv Region

The respondents also mentioned attempts to correct their own internal feelings, reported trying to avoid those feelings, muffle them, and postpone feelings for later.

“I suppress depression, cry and pray a lot”.

Woman, 55, city, not a regional center

“It's hard to describe, I don't think that my emotions from the beginning of the war were processed, I feel anxious about processing them”.

Woman, 48, Kyiv

“I feel very good, I just don't react to emotions”.

Man, 65, Pokrov, Dnipropetrovsk Region

However, a prominent characteristic of this wave was the widespread strategy which can be generalized as **trying to mobilize and focus one's emotional resources as much as possible in order to live in an unfavorable and mentally difficult**

**situation, caused by the war in the country, for a long time.** To live in a situation of uncertain future, physical danger, forced displacement, separation from family and friends, etc. The answers of the respondents in this wave constantly featured the verb **“to hang in”** (“I’m hanging in there,” “I try to hang in there”), as well as the words **“collected,” “concentrated,” “focused.”** The respondents said that they tried to focus solely on their work or another activity they were engaged in, on living each particular day, but to avoid feeling their emotions or thinking about anxiety-inducing questions. To describe their state, the respondents often mentioned qualities such as strength, resilience, stubbornness, resolve, healthy anger. These expressions often featured directives that targeted the respondent themselves: “need to,” “cannot,” “must” “keep myself together,” “collect myself,” “not lose heart.”

“Generally stable. Now is not the time to relax and fall out of line”.  
Man, 32, Kyiv

“I can’t say I’m very cheerful or energetic, but I force myself to avoid descending into “doomerism.” I try not to give up and to fill myself with hope. I evaluate my state at 6/10”.  
Woman, 20, regional center

“I have no energy for emotions. Only to take steps for self-preservation. The most important thing is to survive”.  
47, Boryspil, Kyiv Region

“Uncertainty, fear, trying to collect myself in everything. [...]”  
Woman, 27, Chornomorsk, Odesa Region

“Exhaustion, but controlled and overcomeable by willpower”.  
Man, 45, Kropyvnytsky

For a significant share of the respondents, these survival strategies went beyond their personal experience: for them, the desire to control their emotions and “hang in there” was related to their faith in the victory, their striving to contribute to it by volunteering, working, supporting their family, doing something useful.

“[...] There’s a fear of being disappointed after the victory, but also confidence that I’m responsible for preventing this disappointment from happening: this is our country, we’re the ones who will build it. Generally, the current experience isn’t easy for me, but I cope and believe that we can do it, we will win and rebuild”.  
Woman, 46, Kyiv

“I try to avoid getting nervous and to do whatever I can, because I know that the better my mental state is, the more useful I will be”.  
Woman, 46, Lviv



"I currently read psychology literature, which helps me get rid of anxiety without pills. I try to avoid worrying about things I can't influence directly, I focus more on solving issues within my control. In general, I try to keep myself sane as much as I can, because uncontrolled anxiety is unproductive, and its presence doesn't bring the victory closer".

Woman, 27, Kyiv

In the previous wave of the study in November, the respondents' emotional state was almost entirely negative (from chronic exhaustion and stress to anxiety and fear due to the intense bombing of infrastructure), and hope for the victory was not as frequently occurring in the answers as, for instance, in August 2022. Compared to this, in the newest wave of the survey, **hope and faith in the victory have become much more frequent in the answers again**. Quite often, it was this faith that served as an additional source of support for people. In addition, the answers frequently featured phrases such as "I want to believe," "I still believe." The respondents could also use the words about faith and hope to conclude their answers in which they described their feelings about the horrors of the war, destruction, human losses, and the cruelty of the Russian army.

"[...] In general, I'm prone to anxiety and depressive disorders, but now my state is much better than it was, say, in 2020. Anger against the enemy motivates me to exercise, the example of our heroic warriors helps me overcome the pity for myself. [...] Sure, there's also the pain for the number of victims in our nation. But I try to focus on my faith in victory and changes for the better in our country".

Woman, 27, Kyiv

"[...] Great hope for the Victory. As strong as ever, I don't lose heart".

Woman, 62, Kherson

"[...] Right now my emotions have stabilized, I can't remember the last time I cried terribly (which used to happen at the beginning). I smile more often and believe in our country's Victory. I try to be socially useful for the residents of our community and IDPs [internally displaced people]. I load myself with work, because I like to work both intellectually and physically".

Woman, 25, town, Rivne Region

In general, the rest of the respondents' emotional states in February–March 2023 mostly matched the previous wave of the study, conducted in November 2022.

Just like before, **the respondents were anxious** about bombings, worried about their family and friends as well as about their future. **Constant nervous tension** could also



indirectly affect the respondents' aforementioned sleep issues, constant exhaustion and inability to relax.

"Nervous, because missiles hit both my city and the city where many of my friends and acquaintances live".

Woman, 46, Dnipro

"The main negative state is anxiety. Anxiety related to the situation on the frontline and thoughts about my friends and loved ones in Ukraine. It affects all spheres of life: work, sleep, leisure. I try to fight it".

Man, 56, Kharkiv

"[...] every trivial decision can be a matter of life and death. Should I go shopping or stay home? Should I take the kid to the movies or go for a walk in the park? Where will the air raid catch me? Will something fall on my head? [...]"

Woman, 39, Kyiv

"A rather high level of anxiety, because there is no vision or confidence in the future. Worries about my husband and relatives in Ukraine. High pressure, because I care for a small child on my own".

Woman, 32, Brovary, Kyiv Region

**Instability of their own emotions** also remained a significant problem for the respondents: they described their emotions as changeable, polarized; they noted their tendency for crying and irritability in mundane situations. The news remained one of the biggest triggers of strong emotional reactions which are difficult to control. The respondents also described that they managed to control their emotions for some time, but then they got "overwhelmed" with them, they "broke through," etc.

"Like an emotional roller coaster. If I'm happy, I want to feel joy and laugh with my whole heart. If I'm sad, I want to cry. My state changes often depending on the news, a few times per day even".

Woman, 36, town, Odesa Region

"My mood is like a sinusoid, I never know what will upset me or make me happy. I've definitely become very aggressive and irritated".

Woman, 30, Zaporizhia

"Emotional roller coaster. Sometimes I get hopeful for quick and good changes, other times I'm desperate and feel helpless again".

Woman, 50, Mariupol

"My mood is always like a roller coaster. When my husband is close, on medical leave, I'm happy with a drop of sadness because he's going to go to war. All the news from the frontline about the bombing of peaceful cities makes me cry. [...]"

Woman, 49, Kryvyi Rih, Dnipropetrovsk Region

As for the instability of emotional states, this wave revealed another trend that started to manifest in the respondents' answers. In November and especially in August 2022, the respondents often noted that they felt their emotions "return," that they had to face all the feelings they had been repressing consciously or subconsciously, and that it made their emotional state fragile. In turn, in February–March 2023, a year after the beginning of the full-scale war, the answers showed many more mentions not about suppressed emotions, but rather about **repressed memories** which were "returning." Some respondents used the words "**trauma**," "**traumatic**," "**traumatization**" to describe this.

"I'm exhausted, my health is also failing due to the stress I've experienced. I'm also starting to feel the impact of last year's memories, and it's traumatic. [...]"

Woman, 24, Kyiv

"Today is the anniversary, everyone on social media is reflecting, recalling, grieving. I'm not ready to face these emotions or process them yet, so I feel a bit detached. But today I had unpleasant, sticky dreams about the beginning of the war—subconsciously this experience is still recalled and grieved over".

Woman, 26, Kyiv

"[...] I've discovered that I was actually scared during bombings, although I used to deny this. While my father was at the frontline, I was ashamed to admit I was scared, knowing that he has much more horrible things around him. But when he returned home in late November, I, on the one hand, was no longer worried about him, and on the other hand, I realized I'd been deceiving myself all this time when I told myself I was not afraid. [...]"

Woman, 29, Irpin, Kyiv Region

"I'm a bit tired, although I try to hold on, but memories about my city and thoughts about it appear more and more often".

Woman, 20, Mariupol

Some respondents, just like in the previous waves, wrote that they **experienced depressive states, the feeling of strong mental pain, and loneliness**.

"I'm dying inside. Or I'm already dead, and this is hell. Pain, agony".

Woman, 33, Ukrayinka, Kyiv Region

"Expectations, faith in the victory, pain, pain to the limit, but I need to preserve my strength, there's going to be a lot of work later. Sometimes I just shut myself off and wait again".

Woman, 57, Energodar, Zaporizhia Region

"Emotional exhaustion... There's no more room for bitter feelings, my heart is overflowing with pain... There's no more room to go... Emotions seem to grow callous. But it's only on the outside".

Woman, 60, Dnipro

"I feel like I'm already extremely emotionally exhausted. There's barely any fear, but I feel like I've never known such strong feelings: anger, hatred, contempt for the enemies. My soul hurts for those on the frontline".

Woman, 62, Kyiv

The experience of extremely strong emotions, their instability led to **emotional exhaustion**. Being in this state long-term, as well as loneliness, the feeling of powerlessness and loss of control over the situation, and other negative emotions eventually led the respondents to the state of **apathy**. The respondents wrote about losing feelings completely, being "frozen," "numb," "in stupor"; they reported feeling absent in the physical space they were in, and having difficulties with making emotional contact with the world. The respondents often mentioned that it was hard for them to feel joy even from being in nature.

"[...] I visited a wonderful, beautiful city recently, with my head I was aware of how beautiful it was, but I felt nothing in my soul. As if I had a bag over my head. No awe, no fascination, no emotions. I can be sincerely happy for other people, sincerely sympathize, but I quickly forget how it feels. It's as if all the biggest emotions have already been experienced, and compared to them all the other ones will be very dull, gray".

Woman, 23, Zaporizhia

"[...] I've just noticed that it's hard for me to react emotionally to even the most horrible news. I'm rarely touched by anything, although I do have brief bouts of anger, rage and hate against Russians. I generally have an indifference and emptiness inside, which scares me. I hope it'll pass eventually, because I don't want to stay like this".

Woman, 27, Kyiv

"Confusion, apathy, loneliness, no-one to talk to, sadness, anxiety... [...] I can't make myself eat properly. I do the bare minimum to care for myself. I try to fill nights and days with work to get away from these feelings and thoughts... For a while I drank a lot of alcohol, but now I've replaced it with sedatives..."

Man, 35, Kyiv

## Part 5 ● Society

## 5.1 ● Ideas about connection to Ukraine

We asked the respondents how their ideas about their connection to Ukraine had changed since the beginning of the full-scale invasion.<sup>20</sup> They mostly described these changes through personal experiences and mentioned both positive and negative feelings.

A significant share of the study participants reported that their connection to Ukraine and Ukrainian society had become stronger. Nevertheless, some respondents were worried about the future that awaits Ukraine and about their lives in the country.

The respondents noted that during the full-scale war, their connection to Ukraine had become more **conscious and articulated** than before. To describe these changes, they used verbs such as “crystallized,” “established,” “strengthened.”

As for their emotions, the respondents were the most likely to mention **pride**.<sup>21</sup> The study participants felt proud of the Ukrainian society and country in general, as well as of the people around them personally. They were also proud of being a part of Ukrainian society. In addition, they noted that during the full-scale invasion they had rethought their identity as Ukrainians, which had become more articulated and conscious. This, in particular, was expressed in their interest in the country’s history and culture and in their desire to continue living and planning their future in Ukraine. These trends resonate with the [previous](#) waves of the study, during which we focused on the formation and development of national identity.

“I’ve realized that Ukrainians are incredible people, very brave, and I’ve started to value our culture and traditions more”.

Woman, 18, Lviv

**Love** was another emotion mentioned by the respondents in their descriptions of their connection to Ukraine. It was aimed both at the country in general, their hometowns, and their

<sup>20</sup> Question formulation: “How has your concept of your connection to Ukraine changed since the beginning of the full-scale invasion?”

<sup>21</sup> Other research data also point to this. According to the findings of a complex [study](#) by the Rating Sociology Group about a year of the full-scale war, the main emotion felt by respondents when they think about Ukraine is pride. It was mentioned by 75% of the respondents. [According to](#) Info Sapiens, the share of people who are proud of being citizens of Ukraine has increased: their share was at 69% in 2020 and at 98% in August 2022.

fellow citizens. However, positive emotions often existed alongside negative ones. For example, some respondents said that along with love, they felt **pain and despair** due to the war and destruction of Ukrainian cities, towns and villages by the Russian army.

“The level of love for Ukraine is off the charts. Only now do I understand what it means to be Ukrainian”.

Woman, 56, Zaporizhia

“I’ve felt that Ukraine is really mine! And I feel pain for it, pain for Mariupol, for Bakhmut, although I’ve never been there, but each destroyed house is like a hole inside”.

Woman, 39, Kharkiv

Other changes mentioned by the study participants include the stronger feeling of **solidarity** based on experiencing shared grief and tragedy. According to the respondents, the war had become an experience that united the population of Ukraine and encouraged people to help others. This manifested as increased trust, empathy for fellow citizens, and the feeling of unity with others. Some noted that the events they had experienced since February 2022, such as evacuation, made them closer with the people who were next to them in these moments. Similar feelings were shared by the respondents in the previous waves of the study, especially during the first days and months of the full-scale war.

“The war has changed our lives, united people even more, grief has made us all a family, there are no strangers among Ukrainians”.

Woman, 62, Kyiv

“I felt an incredible feeling of unity with the people who left Kyiv together with us! I felt anxious for those who stayed in Kyiv, for the soldiers whose car was driving to the turn to Hostomel alongside ours. I will remember them my whole life!”

Woman, 71

In their answers to the question about their connection to Ukraine, the respondents also deliberated about their own role in the country’s social, political and civil life. They said that it was **important for them to feel involved in the public discussion and take part in the future victory**. While describing their experiences, the respondents noted their desire to be needed and useful. Some reported feelings of shame and guilt for, in their opinions, not doing enough for the future victory.

Changes in their connection to Ukraine were noted by some respondents who were forced to move abroad and lived there

at the time of the survey. They noted the **dualism of their experience** and emphasized that while they were physically abroad, they remained engaged in the Ukrainian information space. The respondents described alienation from the reality that surrounded them abroad and pointed out their own exclusion from the cultural and social life in their new location. In addition, they expressed the desire to return to Ukraine.

"I cherish Ukraine just like before, I want to return when it's safe. I sometimes feel like I'm at home because I don't separate myself spiritually from Ukraine, I live on the news constantly. It helps that Budapest is close, right nearby (in my mind), I can go there quickly by train or bus".

Woman, 65, town, Kyiv Region

"[...] I try to come to terms with the fact that I was only in Ukraine for 2 weeks in the whole year since the evacuation. I can't believe it, because mentally I'm 100% there".

Woman, 35

At the same time, along with the emotional elation in the respondents' thoughts about their connection to Ukraine, there were also the feelings of **anxiety and perplexion, often directed into the future**. The study participants were concerned about what life would be like in Ukraine in a few years or when the war ends, and they were worried about whether they would be able to find their place in the society of the future.

Thinking about their connection to Ukraine, the respondents pointed out the additional **social differentiation caused by the war** and noted that they were alarmed by the prospect of growing social tensions and new misunderstandings emerging between different population categories, such as people with different political views, Russian and Ukrainian speakers, those who had to move abroad and those who never left their cities or towns. Some of the respondents who were forced to leave Ukraine mentioned that they felt ashamed and guilty for being abroad. In addition, they expressed the fear of facing a lack of understanding and judgment by other people when they return.

Some respondents also noted that their **connection to Ukraine had weakened**—for instance, they noticed that the distance between them and the rest of society was growing. Finally, in the thoughts about their connection with Ukraine, a number of the respondents emphasized that they felt abandoned and useless.



"I'm ashamed that I left the country when it probably needed me the most. Sometimes it's scary to think that when I return, I won't find a place for myself. Society has changed, and I did not experience this with it".

Woman, 28, Kyiv

"It really hurts to read about the incessant deaths and destruction, I feel sorry for every Ukrainian, I regularly cry from injustice, I'm very sorry for the kids, especially them. But at the same time I see that the cultural, linguistic differences between Ukrainian regions haven't gone anywhere, they show up more and more often in the form of horrible arguments, humiliating comments [...]".

Woman, 26, Dnipro

"It has changed according to the tendencies typical for the population in wartime. Hatred for the enemies automatically increases respect for one's own land. Like an empathic striving to defend the victim and treat them with love and comprehensive understanding. But at the same time, I'm scared about the right-wing ideas in society which are spreading just exponentially".

Man, 34, Lviv

"I feel like I've become a stranger here, I'm more and more often judged by friends and acquaintances for my fear of aggression and wanting to avoid violence".

Man, 26, Kyiv

Anxiety about the future combined with **the desire for change**. Some respondents' answers demonstrated increased sensitivity to injustice and negative phenomena in society, such as corruption, oligarchy, or human rights violations. The war had become a turning point for the respondents, and after the victory, in their opinion, society cannot tolerate various cases of injustice, and it should demand progressive transformations.

"[...] I also often think that I've become more radical towards corruption, oligarchy, inefficiency in Ukraine... I feel like we as a society cannot afford to tolerate all this, because then after the victory these manifestations of degradation will lead us all to apathy and despair. Because then it'll be unclear what all the sacrifices we've made were for".

Woman, 29, Dnipro

## 5.2 ● Experience of forced displacement

The full-scale invasion caused mass displacement of the Ukrainian population both within the country and abroad. About 7 million people<sup>22</sup> changed their city or region of residence within Ukraine, while 8 million<sup>23</sup> had the experience of moving abroad; a certain share of the latter remained outside of Ukraine at the time of the survey. This experience entailed some major challenges, complex decision making, difficulties in the process of adaptation and integration into new communities, reconsideration of one's own habits and attitudes. We invited the respondents who had experience of forced displacement to share their thoughts<sup>24</sup> about it with those who had no such experience.

The answers revealed two trends: the respondents emphasized the **need for understanding between people with different experiences** and gave **advice based on their own experience about what to do if one is faced with the need to move** (the advice concerned the process of decision making, ways of adaptation, preparations for the move beforehand, etc.).

The biggest challenges for the respondents during the displacement included **hesitation while making the decision to leave one's city or town and fear due to a lack of knowledge about the options for settling** in their new place of residence. At the same time, based on their own experience of moving, they recommended to prioritize saving one's own life and health, and therefore **not to delay the decision and not to be afraid of moving**. They also suggested being attentive to one's own emotional needs and wishes and moving to another location if one feels discomfort or lack of safety where they are.

Given the general complexity of the experience of moving and adaptation at a new location, some respondents believed that

<sup>22</sup> According to the data from the Minister of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories as of the beginning of 2023: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/iryna-vereshchuk-zavdannia-minreintehratsii-na-2023-rik-intehratsiia-vnutrishnikh-pereselentsiv>.

<sup>23</sup> According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as of April 2023: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

<sup>24</sup> Question formulation: "Because of the war, millions of Ukrainians have been forced to move within the country or abroad. If you have had experience of forced displacement due to the war, is there anything you would like to tell those Ukrainians who have not had such experience?"

the decision to move should only be made in cases when one's life is in danger. One of the most widespread reasons for this position was the significance of familiar **physical space** in alleviating the negative experience and maintaining one's emotional health. The study participants spoke about a pronounced unwillingness to leave the physical space of their own home, because in times of hardship and rapid change their **home provided the feeling of stability and acted as a connection to life before the full-scale invasion.**

"Everyone made decisions based on emotions, reflexes. Regular normal people (who we all were before 24 February) had no experience/idea how to act when there is gunfire near you/when missiles fly and people die".

Man, 29, Kyiv

"Displaced within Ukraine. It's very hard, but it's even harder to sit under the bombing. The most important thing is to save your family's lives".

Woman, 47, Toretsk, Donetsk Region

"If you believe it will be better for you and you'll feel safe, then go".

Woman, 38, village, Kyiv Region

"When I returned to Kyiv, I felt calmer and got some energy to do something. And when I was abroad, I was torn by guessing how I'd feel there, how safe it was there, maybe I should wait another week".

Woman, 27, Kyiv

The respondents tried to share various aspects of their experience, because this could deepen the understanding of displaced people's situation and at the same time inform those who can face the challenge of displacement in the future. According to them, one of the most negative aspects of the experience was the **emotional difficulty**. It was caused by disruption of the usual routine, the need to leave one's home and possessions, to get separated from one's family and loved ones, and by the need to build new habits and adapt to the new environment. The study participants spoke about increased emotional hardship related to being outside of Ukraine. According to their observations, they got more emotional about the news and events in Ukraine after moving abroad. The experience of displacement was made even more difficult by problems with adaptation: the respondents mentioned **finding a job** at their new location and **searching for housing** as **the most unresolved issues**.

"I spent some time in a country house, my own, where I spend time every year even without a war. So it was "artificial displacement."

But that period, 7 months there, did ruin many practices that were traditional for me, so it wasn't exactly easy".

Woman, 42, Kyiv

"It's very scary and painful to leave important things behind. Books. Children's drawings. Musical instruments".

Woman, 41, village, Kyiv Region

"I've been displaced since 2014. So I know for sure that all the displaced people will have mental health problems and depressive states in a year or two if they can't return home".

Woman, 54, village, Poltava Region

"It's not better abroad than at home. Yes, there's no shooting here, but people look at you like you're a homeless stray. It's impossible to find a job if you don't know the language".

Woman, 36, Izium, Kharkiv Region

"I moved abroad in early March and stayed there until late December. Anxiety and ideas about perceiving the situation of reality in Ukraine while you're abroad are exaggerated".

Woman, 27, Kyiv

In their answers, the respondents described the opportunities to receive help both within the country and abroad. They drew attention to the **caring attitude of host communities that offered many ways to support the newcomers**, both at the institutional level and through the work of volunteers.

However, despite the availability of support, the respondents emphasized the importance of gaining **agency** in the organization of one's life, asking for help on one's own, looking for ways to receive help (these thoughts were especially prominent with regard to moving out of Ukraine). The aid system was featured in the answers not only in the context of receiving it but also with regard to the need to participate in supporting other displaced people and the locals. The study participants spoke about the need for reciprocity and everyone's active position, regardless of their experience, when it came to organizing life and supporting Ukraine.

"My experience of displacement was rather positive. We're very grateful to the Opishnya Village Council for treating displaced people with kindness. Help with the papers, organizing, humanitarian aid distribution. Individual approach and painstaking labor".

Woman, 61, village, Kharkiv Region

"It'll all be for the best, look for people, don't be ashamed of asking for help".

Woman, 49, Oster, Chernihiv Region

"It doesn't matter to me if someone had this experience, regardless of having or not having this experience we have to support one another".

Woman, 35, Kyiv

Along with helping others, the respondents also mentioned the importance of **constant support from their loved ones**—both those from whom they were separated due to displacement and those who shared their experience of displacement. The support, in their opinion, involved spending time together, talking regularly, showing empathy.

"Spend more time with your family and loved ones, ask older people about their youth, how your parents met, how they fell in love, etc".

Man, 31, Kyiv

To overcome the complex consequences of moving, the respondents **emphasized the need to prepare for this experience in advance**. Their advice covered a wide range of subjects which can be categorized into two groups: advice about material preparations for displacement and advice about learning information.

The respondents spoke about the importance of preparing the necessary set of things that should be taken with you. According to them, it must be the **minimum amount of the most basic necessities** for the first period of staying at a new location and for the move itself. Large amounts of luggage can make the process of moving more difficult. They especially emphasized the difficulty of buying **medicine** abroad, so they recommended taking enough medicine with you.

"If you live on the frontline, it's better to leave in advance than to end up under occupation. It also makes sense to buy basic things, keep a stock of them, and pack an emergency suitcase. At the new location, dishes, clothes, and sheets will be important. You can buy everything, but initially you'll feel lost and won't understand what you can find and where".

Woman, 20, Mariupol, Donetsk Region

As for the information preparations for moving, the respondents saw it as **comparing the conditions for Ukrainians in different countries**, which can help one choose the most suitable country for them (in particular, by learning about the terms of medical care and help for children).

"If you have time, I'd recommend learning more about social and financial support packages offered by different countries to Ukrainian refugees".

Woman, 29, Starobilsk, Luhansk Region

Another group of recommendations concerned **ensuring the proper conditions for traveling with pets** and monitoring their health during the journey.

"Don't abandon pets, monitor their health after moving".  
Man, 34, Kharkiv

The respondents who had experience of moving within Ukraine and those who had moved abroad usually spoke about the same set of difficulties and recommendations. However, **the situation of those who had moved to other countries was characterized by being in a new cultural and linguistic environment as well as a new legal space**. So they were more likely to emphasize the emotional difficulty of displacement and difficulties with adaptation: looking for a job or housing. To solve these issues, the study participants recommended having agency in arranging one's new life, looking for sources of help on one's own.

"It's very hard to find a job in another country, people are exploited like slaves. I know people who worked 12 hours a day for a month and weren't paid. Housing is very expensive and hard to look for. In a different country, it's much harder to protect yourself in the legal space. The language and culture barrier exists. Medical services, if you want them quickly, cost 2–5 times more than in Ukraine".  
Woman, 29, Kharkiv

Staying abroad also **changed people's attitudes** to certain aspects of Ukrainian culture and government **for the better**, which was caused by gaining experience of interacting with the institutions and societies in other countries. It was also important to maintain connection to Ukraine, according to the respondents. They saw this connection as having **an active position abroad**: participating in protests and demonstrations, helping collect humanitarian aid and donations to support the army and people, informing the locals about the current situation in Ukraine, history, culture and traditions.<sup>25</sup>

"It's not as bad in Ukraine as we tend to think".  
Man, 47, village, Kyiv Region

"Wherever fate throws you, you should do everything to bring our victory closer—from, say, making trench candles, to being able to donate to various fundraisers for the needs of the army".  
Woman, 50, Kyiv

Some of the respondents who had no experience of internal displacement or moving abroad also expressed their thoughts

<sup>25</sup> Read more about the changes in the respondents' ideas about their connection to Ukraine in Part 5.1 "Ideas about connection to Ukraine."



about the situation of forced migration. Their views were based both on their own observations and experiences of communication with displaced people and on the information spread in the media and on social media, on stories told by others.

The survey participants mostly expressed **compassion and understanding** of the difficulty of the displaced people's experience. The respondents emphasized the need to create favorable conditions for receiving displaced people, to avoid passing judgment or minimizing their problems, to view displacement as a forced step rather than a result of one's own desires or strategies to improve one's life. The respondents' answers also showed their understanding of the difficulty of adaptation after forced displacement, the need to restart life from scratch, to change one's routines, to find one's place in the local community and the local employment structure.

"I returned from abroad on the first days of the war, so I had no experience of leaving my place of residence due to the war. But I wouldn't judge anyone who doesn't want to live under shelling, bombing, or threat of occupation by Russians".

Man, 36, Kyiv

"If not for the war (and blackouts), nobody would be moving".

Woman, 30, Lviv

"We should all understand that the displaced are people who have lost everything".

Man, 69, city

A small share of the respondents who had no experience of moving **expressed negative opinions about the displacement of others**. They described changing one's place of residence as "running away from the war" or wanting to use financial aid, they emphasized their own resolve not to leave their town and country.

Some answers also included thoughts about the need for **gender differentiation by roles** in wartime. In this case, men were assigned roles related to participation in military activities, while women were assigned the role of childcare and moral support for the men. These opinions were mostly expressed by older participants who had no experience of displacement.

"Men should return and defend their Homeland. Women and children should be where they're safe and morally support their men".

Man, 52, Kyiv



The need to **reach understanding with other social groups** was prominent in the answers of both the respondents who had experience of displacement and the respondents who had no such experience. The survey participants were concerned about the tensions that emerged between the IDPs and those who remained in their own towns. These tensions were mostly related to condemnation of the life strategies of the other group and usually were not a result of local conflicts between IDPs and the host community. So the answers often included a call to try and understand the situation and motivations that drove the actions of all members of society. The respondents also noted that condemnation was widespread online and in the media, while in direct interactions they had not experienced this kind of treatment.

"We definitely can't judge either the people who have left or those who stay, even in the territories which are battle zones. It's all complex. Everyone has their own circumstances and their own margin of resilience".

Woman, 40, Kyiv

"I'm very scared that after the war our traumatized society will drown in endless strife between ourselves instead of working to build the economy, army, education, culture. And one of the fault lines will be between those who left and those who stayed in Ukraine. I'd really like for people to understand that every experience of this war is difficult, and we'll never fully understand what even the people closest to us have experienced".

Woman, 35, Kyiv

"Think well before saying (writing) something. Think honestly: what would you really do under bombing and shelling, given the responsibility for the fate of your loved ones".

Man, 56, Kharkiv

## 5.3 ● Thoughts about the course of the war

In the previous wave of the study, we noticed that many of the respondents' concerns were related to the course and length of the war. Some people took these predictions into account while planning their own lives. So in this wave we decided to ask the study participants what they thought about the further course of the war.<sup>26</sup>

The respondents' answers were mostly about the length of the war and the development of various scenarios for the future. Some study participants expressed contradictory opinions about the possible developments. For instance, they could think about both negative and positive scenarios at once, or that the war would end soon and be long. Some respondents said that they were not thinking about the further course of the war.

The respondents' answers about the **length of the war** reveal the following tendencies: some people expect the war to end soon, and others believe that it will be long. The latter category includes answers saying that the war will last for years, or answers in which people gave a generalized answer ("long") rather than a specific one.

"I think that the war will last another few years, and we should plan our lives based on this prospect".

Man, 36, Lviv

"This is long-term... And when the end is in sight, I'll already be an elderly retiree... And thus life has passed".

Woman, 45, Kyiv

Those participants who expected the war to end soon mostly mentioned the scenario of Ukraine's victory. Some study participants noted that their opinion that the victory is coming soon is a belief aimed at maintaining their emotional state rather than a rational analysis of the situation.

"All I can think about is I want all of this to end soon. I realize that this is emotional rather than rational, but it's nicer to live if I think that, for example, we will celebrate victory this year".

Woman, 23, Kyiv

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<sup>26</sup> Question formulation: "If you have thought in the past few months about how the war will continue to develop, please tell us what your thoughts about this were."

Another group of answers described scenarios of further developments. The **negative scenarios** in the respondents' answers include thoughts about the enemy's offensive activities, a world war and the use of nuclear weapons, the expectation that the war will take a long time or that it will be frozen.

"I realized that the enemy advance would start when the ground froze or dried up, it didn't happen, I'm very pleased. Our guys hold the defense very well".

Woman, 49, Kyiv

"The war will turn into a slow conflict. Our best warriors will be dying, and when there's nobody left to go to the frontline, Ukraine will sign a peace deal with Russia. As a result, we will be left in ruins, there will be nobody to work and rebuild. The state of Ukraine will be the worst in its entire history".

Woman, 43, Lviv

The respondents who spoke about **positive scenarios** mentioned the victory and the death of Putin. Some of the participants' opinions about the victory involved the stage of negotiations. A number of answers were about returning the occupied territories under Ukrainian control. The respondents emphasized the importance of military support by Ukraine's western partners (European countries and the US) for achieving the victory. Some believed that the sooner the weapons which Ukraine needs are provided, the sooner the AFU will be able to reclaim the temporarily occupied territories. In addition, a number of study participants found it important to note that despite their faith in the victory, they were also aware that Ukraine would suffer significant human losses. Some of the surveyed also mentioned the potential economic crisis in the postwar period.

"Our victory is due to the loss of our best sons".

Woman, 61, Smila, Cherkasy Region

"We should receive more weapons, and then we'll go to liberate Melitopol, and then Crimea".

Woman, 38, village, Kyiv Region

"It can take a while, but Ukraine's victory will definitely happen. Russia must be liquidated as an administrative entity".

Woman, 59, Kyiv

"Russians are screwed. And this is a polite way to put it".

Man, 55, Odesa

"I'm waiting for the victory. At least to the borders of February 24, 2022, but hopefully to the borders of 1991".

Woman, 62, Dnipro

A number of respondents claimed that they **were not thinking about the further course of the war**. Some study participants justified this by saying that they did not have enough expertise in this issue. Others said that they were avoiding thoughts about further developments because these thoughts caused unpleasant emotions.

"I wish it ended soon and victory came, but thoughts about the future make me feel despair and helplessness, so I try to focus on the here and now".

Woman, 24, Kyiv

"I'm not Arestovych to engage in empty predictions".

Woman, 29, Kyiv

"I don't think about that because I'm not an expert. I didn't think there'd be a war, but it began. So there's no point in thinking, we should act. I do something every day in order to think less and not fill my head with negativity, heavy ideas and depression".

Man, 29, Kyiv

## ● Conclusions

Based on the survey we conducted, we can draw the following conclusions about the experiences and feelings in Ukrainian society in February–March 2023.

Compared to the previous waves of the study, the respondents were more likely to direct their thoughts towards the **future** rather than the past. This applied both to their concerns and to the emotions and thoughts about their personal connection to Ukraine.

In this wave, the respondents mostly felt the same concerns as the participants of the fourth and the third waves. The key concerns still included those **related to the war, one's own safety and the safety of one's family and friends, and the concern about the uncertainty of the future**. At the same time, the tendency to worry about the future of the economic and political situation in Ukraine after the war was more prominent in this wave. Other concerns included problems with job search, employment, finances, personal relationships and health.

Separation from loved ones was an experience shared by the majority of the study participants at some point over the course of the full-scale war. The separation has mostly negatively affected communication with family and friends. The respondents mentioned that the separation **had worsened their mental and emotional state, they felt sad, helpless, afraid, lonely and isolated**. The situation was especially difficult for those whose family or loved ones remained in the occupied territories, areas near the frontline, or areas with a lot of missile strikes, because contact with them was unstable. The respondents also noted the lack of in-person communication, meetings with loved ones, and the inability to spend quality time together. All of these factors provoked the **feeling of the loss of connection, emotional distance from family and friends**.

The respondents noted that separation required them to make extra effort to keep in touch with their loved ones, such as **traveling to other Ukrainian cities or calling their family and friends more often** than before the war. On the one hand, this allowed them to receive emotional support. On the other hand, difficulties and obstacles in communication could cause them to feel exhausted and tired of communication. Some respondents also mentioned that they felt guilt and shame if they did not pay enough attention to their loved ones.

A certain share of the respondents emphasized that separation had affected the communication with their loved ones positively. They noted that this experience allowed them to become more **responsive and caring**. The study participants mentioned that the experience of separation made them closer with their friends and family, encouraged them to be in touch more often than before the war and to show their love.

Air raid warnings, bombings and blackouts significantly affected the labor conditions and the organization of the respondents' working hours. They frequently led to a situation when, as a result of unplanned pauses, the respondents **worked more** than their regular working hours. In addition, regardless of where the work was done (at home or not), air raid warnings, bombings and blackouts led to **delays in the completion of work tasks, service provision and manufacturing of the final product**. It was difficult to plan and organize work—not the least because the sirens, bombings and blackouts were external factors which were difficult to control, predict, and therefore take any steps beforehand to deal with them. Education and health care workers were also especially likely to speak about their high responsibility for the lives of people in their care.

All of this, in turn, **increased the level of stress and tension** for employees, self-employed people and business owners; for the latter, it also led to **reduced manufacturing and lower number of orders, and therefore profits**. Some self-employed people and entrepreneurs said that these conditions had forced them to put their work on pause. In order to be able to work, the respondents tried to organize their time differently (particularly by synchronizing their working hours with the planned blackout schedule); they bought generators and other equipment that provided them with electricity during blackouts. In addition, in order to have access to power and internet, they had to move around the city and/or made the decision to move to another Ukrainian region or abroad.

Just like in the previous waves of the study, there is still a tendency related to **difficulties with planning**, especially in the aspects of life related to career and professional development. Some respondents noted that their professions had not lost their relevance during the full-scale invasion, while others, on the contrary, realized that they would not be able to continue working in their profession like before. A number of the study participants had already changed their job or occupation or



planned to do it in the future. Their reasons for their desire for change included the opportunity to have a higher income, going into a more relevant or practical occupation, and the opportunity to work remotely. Some respondents also changed the values that guided them in choosing their occupation: they decided to choose the fields they like or the fields that are more useful to society.

Similarly to the previous wave of the study, **Russian attacks on the Ukrainian energy system affected the respondents' everyday lives.** By the time of the survey, uninterrupted power supply had already been mostly reestablished, so the respondents spoke about the experience of blackouts as something they had already dealt with. Just like in the previous waves, they mentioned difficulties with planning their everyday lives and routines due to **bombings and air raid warnings.**

Speaking about their emotional state, the respondents in this wave tended to **reflect on the past, the future, the meaning of life and their work, and about fundamental values and human behavior during the war.** These answers were full of sorrow and grief for the past which can never be recovered, and for the future which will never be the same as it could have been if not for the full-scale war. When they shared their losses, grief, despair, pain, the respondents often deliberated over rhetorical questions or questions that worried them. States such as “confusion,” “uncertainty,” “helplessness” were widespread in the answers of the respondents in this wave. The respondents show how acutely the respondents experienced the feeling of their own helplessness, loss of control, and the unpredictability of events and inability to plan anything long-term.

**Chronic stress and exhaustion** remained widespread among the respondents. Their answers in February–March 2023 also show that these issues were more and more often accompanied not only by problems with memory and concentration but also with **worsening chronic illnesses and sleep disturbances.**

In all waves of the survey, the respondents shared the various strategies they used to control their emotions and the way these emotions are manifested. A prominent characteristic of this wave is the widespread strategy which can be generalized as **trying to mobilize one's emotional resources as much as possible, to be “collected,” to focus on some specific thing, on the “here and now.”** A lot of answers featured the phrase “hang

in there.” Compared to November, hope and faith in the victory were once again more likely to be expressed in the current wave of the survey, particularly as a source of support in the face of negative and heavy reflections about life during the war.

A significant share of the respondents reported that their connection to Ukraine and Ukrainian society had intensified. Despite this, some respondents were worried about the future that awaits the country and about their life in Ukraine. The study participants noted that over the course of the war their connection to Ukraine had become more **conscious and pronounced** than before.

Among the emotions which the respondents felt about Ukraine, the most frequently mentioned was **pride**. The study participants felt proud of Ukrainian society and the country in general, and of the people around them personally. **Love** was another emotion mentioned by the respondents while describing their connection to Ukraine. The love was also aimed both at the country in general, their hometowns, and their compatriots. However, positive emotions often went hand in hand with negative ones. For example, some respondents said that, along with love, they felt **pain and despair** due to the war and the destruction of Ukrainian cities, towns and villages by the Russian army. Other changes mentioned by the respondents included the emergence of a new type of **solidarity** in society, based on the shared experience of grief and tragedy. According to the study participants, the war had become an experience that united the people of Ukraine and encouraged people to help others.

At the same time, along with emotional elevation in the respondents’ thoughts about their connection to Ukraine, we could observe the feelings of **anxiety and confusion**, often directed to the future. The respondents were worried about what life would be like in Ukraine in a few years or when the war ends, and about whether they would be able to find their place in the society of the future. Contemplating their connection to Ukraine, the respondents mentioned additional **social differentiation** caused by the war. They noted that they were wary of the prospect of growing social tensions and new misunderstandings between different population categories—for instance, between people with different political views, Russian speakers and Ukrainian speakers, those who had to move abroad and those who never left their hometown. For

example, some of the respondents who had to leave Ukraine said that they felt shame and guilt for being abroad. In addition, they expressed concern that they could face misunderstanding and condemnation from others when they return.

Despite this, anxiety about the future was combined with the **desire for change**. The answers of some study participants demonstrate a growing sensitivity to injustice and negative phenomena in society, such as corruption, oligarchy or human rights violations. The war has become a turning point for the respondents, and they believe that after the victory society cannot tolerate various cases of injustice and must demand progressive transformations.

The respondents who had the experience of forced displacement mentioned that one of the biggest challenges for them was the process of **making the decision to move**, due to hesitation and the lack of a clear understanding of the opportunities for organizing their lives at the new location. The difficulty of this experience was also caused by being displaced from one's usual physical space, by the lack of opportunity to maintain one's daily routines, which created the feeling of being "torn away" from the life before the full-scale invasion.

Adaptation after displacement was not always successful, and the biggest source of problems was the **process of integration in the employment structure and the search for housing**. However, the displaced people mostly said that this experience was made easier by the active support of the host community that provided both emotional and material support. The process of arranging their life after moving abroad was seen by the respondents as more difficult compared to moving within Ukraine, which was caused by a lack of language comprehension, a lack of understanding of the social norms and the legal system in another country.

Regardless of whether they had the experience of displacement, the survey participants were concerned about tensions between groups with different experiences of the war. These tensions manifested as stereotypical ideas about people's motives for staying in the occupied territories, moving within the country or moving abroad, which were mostly spread by the media. According to the respondents, in order to avoid conflict and fragmentation in society, Ukrainians need to look for ways to reach an understanding between different

groups, to avoid the spread of hate speech and stigmatizing narratives.

People's opinions about the **future course of Russia's war against Ukraine** concerned their expectations about the length of the war: from the belief that the war would end in the near future to the expectation that it would last for years. Those who thought about a **positive scenario** described the victory of Ukraine and the death of Putin. As for **negative scenarios**, the respondents mentioned escalation of the war, including the use of nuclear weapons.