

Physical literacy in social work: current status and prospects implementation of foreign experience in Ukraine

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To initiate a scholarly dialogue on exploring the potential integration of physical literacy into social work practice and the possibilities for its implementation in helping to support diverse client groups, taking into account the experience of Ukrainian-German cooperation.

Materials and Methods. A review of English-language literature on physical literacy was conducted using three scientometric databases to assess the current research landscape and practical applications of physical literacy within the social domain. Factual information about the target population was gathered via a structured questionnaire. The empirical data were analysed using mathematical and statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. All statistical analyses were performed with SPSS Statistics software, version 19.0.0.

Results: A review revealed a wide range of interpretations of physical literacy in contemporary scientific literature, and common standard characteristics were identified across various cultural and scientific perspectives. In social work, physical literacy is predominantly equated with engagement in physical activity. Consequently, its primary perceived benefit is physical and mental health improvement. The influence of physical literacy on cognitive and social dimensions of well-being is acknowledged to a lesser degree.

Conclusions: Social workers are generally prepared to integrate the concept of physical literacy into their professional practice or are already applying some aspects of it, often without explicitly recognizing them as such. Systemic changes are required to ensure the effective implementation of physical literacy in social work and to achieve a meaningful impact on all dimensions of health. These include improvements to the legislative framework—particularly a revision of workload standards for social work professionals—appropriate training for social workers, increased funding, enhanced material and technical resources, and the adoption of an individualized approach to working with clients.

KEY WORDS: physical literacy, social work, social worker, social welfare, health, components of health

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of physical literacy (PL) and its rationale, initially articulated by Australian researcher and nurse practitioner Margaret Whitehead in 1987 and publicly introduced in 1993, is regarded as a fundamental mode of interaction without which we would not be able to realize our human potential [1]. PL is characterized as an “embodiment of human nature and personal potential, serving as a means to enhance individual health” [2]. Scholars from various countries and regions have contributed to the evolution of the definition and conceptualization of PL [3-12]. Today, the concept is widely recognized in North America, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and several Western European countries, including Germany, and is increasingly being adopted in Ukraine [13-14]. PL involves continuous learning that allows people to achieve their goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in the life of their community and society [2; 15]. More

modern interpretations of PL describe it as «motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding, appreciation, and responsibility for participating in physical activity throughout life» [16].

Lviv Polytechnic National University (Lviv, Ukraine), in cooperation with Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg (Germany), has accumulated extensive experience in applying the concept of physical literacy within the field of social work. This collaboration includes joint projects (2015–2019), a series of scientific and practical seminars and conferences (2017–2025), elective courses delivered by Prof. Dr. Olaf Huz for undergraduate and graduate students in social work (online, 2022–2024), as well as thematic lectures for practicing social workers as part of professional development programs organized by the Department of Sociology and Social Work (online, 2023–2025). This practical experience, combined with a thorough analysis of theoretical literature and empirical research findings, as well as the current socio-political context of Ukraine during wartime and

the anticipated post-war recovery, has contributed to a deeper understanding of the potential role of PL in social work. Consequently, the focus of this study was to explore how the concept of physical literacy is represented in contemporary academic discourse in relation to public health and well-being. Additionally, the research aims to identify the areas of social work where PL is already being integrated into professional practice, and to examine how social workers perceive the feasibility of implementing PL in their daily work under martial law and in the context of Ukraine's post-war reconstruction.

AIM

The aim is to initiate a scholarly dialogue on exploring the potential integration of physical literacy into social work practice and the possibilities for its implementation in helping to support diverse client groups, taking into account the experience of Ukrainian-German cooperation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A comprehensive review of English-language literature on physical literacy was conducted using three scientific databases. Additionally, expert consultations were held with Prof. Dr. Olaf Huz, Head of the Sports Center at the Faculty of Humanities, Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg (Germany), and his assistant, Dr. M. Zimlich.

To obtain factual data about the target population, a questionnaire survey was administered. The empirical data were analyzed using a range of statistical methods, including descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Statistical processing was carried out with the assistance of SPSS Statistics software, version 19.0.0.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE STUDY

The research was organized and conducted in line with recognized ethical standards of empirical inquiry. Respondents participated voluntarily, with assurances of anonymity, confidentiality, and mutual trust. They were informed that no responses were considered "correct" or "incorrect," and their professional insights and subjective evaluations were valued. The collected data were used exclusively for scholarly purposes and presented in an aggregated, anonymized form.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Between July 2024 and May 2025, the Department of

Sociology and Social Work at Lviv Polytechnic University conducted a pilot sociological survey among participants of advanced training courses for social work professionals. Within the thematic module "*Health-Promoting Activities in Social Work*," five specialist groups attended an online lecture by Prof. O. Khuz titled "*Perspectives of Physical Literacy for Health Promotion in Social Work*." A total of 99 valid questionnaires were collected. While the study is not representative, it serves to identify preliminary trends and formulate hypotheses for future in-depth research.

The generalized definition of physical literacy underlying the questionnaire for social workers conceptualizes PL as a key factor in personal development, facilitating effective and diverse engagement with both the social environment and the broader world. This definition emphasizes individuals' conscious and confident participation in various, including novel, forms of physical activity and interaction, which fosters self-discovery, realization of human potential, and the enhancement of physical abilities (such as coordination, balance, speed, flexibility, and endurance). Additionally, it supports the development of social competencies, including self-confidence, ethical and cultural sensitivity in communication, empathy, and a forward-looking perspective—thereby contributing to overall health and well-being. A physically literate individual is thus motivated to pursue bodily changes, recognizing their value and positive impact on adaptability in a changing environment.

FRAMEWORK

The work is a fragment of the research project «Research Initiative and Practical Implementation of Socio-political Projects to Resolve Social Problems in Ukraine During Wartime and Post-war Recovery.» No. 0123U103018.

RESULTS

The sample was predominantly female (96%), with most respondents living in Western Ukraine (95.1%). The majority are employed in government and municipal social service agencies (65.7%), while others work in public and charitable organizations (12.1%), local government (8.1%), educational institutions (3%), or outside the social sector but with relevant experience (11.1%). Over half of the participants (57.6%) have up to three years of professional experience, reflecting a relatively young group, while 18.2% have 4–10 years of experience. At the same time, a quarter (24.2%) already have more than 10 years of experience, which

ensures the presence of experienced specialists in the sample. Respondents most often work with persons with disabilities (48.5%), families in difficult situations (41.4%), older adults (40.4%), and internally displaced persons (34.3%). Less frequently, they engage with low-income individuals (28.3%), children from disadvantaged families (25.3%), and war veterans (24.2%), and least often with homeless individuals (3%), persons with mental health issues (5.1%), victims of human trafficking (6.1%), and survivors of gender-based violence (8.1%).

One of the objectives of the survey was to identify the qualities that respondents associate with physical literacy. While the majority of participants rated most of the proposed attributes as important, certain characteristics were selected with notably higher frequency, allowing for the identification of key features in the conceptualization of physical literacy. Foremost among these were awareness of the health benefits of physical activity (72.7%), motivation to engage in regular exercise (68.7%), and the ability to tailor physical activity to individual needs and capabilities (65.7%). Additionally, a positive attitude towards physical activity (61.6%) and the capacity to maintain a balance between physical activity and other life domains (52.5%) were also rated relatively highly.

The survey findings indicate that the concept of physical literacy, as understood by the surveyed social workers, is primarily centered around physical activity. While attributes such as adherence to safety guidelines (50.5%) and the capacity to independently plan and execute physical exercises (47.5%) were also recognized as important, they were less frequently emphasized. Social and communicative competencies—such as participation in team games (34.3%), conflict resolution during physical activities (31.3%), and the ability to motivate others to engage in physical activity (32.3%)—were among the least cited characteristics. This suggests that, in comparison to individual attributes, the social dimension of physical literacy is perceived as relatively less significant. Similarly, traits such as confidence in one's physical abilities (33.3%) and perseverance in pursuing physical goals (38.4%) were mentioned less often, yet they remain an important part of the overall image of a physically literate person.

The reviewed literature conceptualizes physical literacy as encompassing physical, psychological, cognitive, and social domains of learning. This multidimensional nature necessitates the simplification of existing knowledge and terminology to enhance its accessibility and practical application by educators, coaches, and public health professionals involved in physical activity promotion [9]. Concurrently, the

concept of physical literacy is increasingly aligned with the framework of functional growth, which offers a holistic approach to fostering physical activity by integrating affective and cognitive dimensions alongside physical and motor development [5]. As a manifestation of personal development, PL is regarded as a foundational literacy through which other forms of literacy are mediated. It enables individuals not only to cultivate their own physical activity but also to contribute to broader holistic literacy, facilitating self-awareness, interpersonal understanding, and engagement with the surrounding world [17]. According to A. Chen and colleagues, acquiring PL requires familiarity with learning theories, mechanisms of motivational regulation, and principles of self-determination. These elements are essential for task completion and for fostering competence and self-regulation strategies that sustain motivation for movement [4]. Furthermore, Australian scholars emphasize the importance of critical competencies for PL educators and researchers, notably racial literacy and cultural competence [18].

Analysis of the data obtained revealed the most relevant indicators that social workers may utilize to assess the physical literacy of their clients. For further analysis, only those indicators that were endorsed by more than 50% of respondents were considered. Specifically, the findings highlight that the most frequently cited indicators of physical literacy include clients' awareness of the health benefits of physical activity (64.6%), the ability to perform basic physical exercises (58.6%), motivation to engage in physical activity (57.6%), the capacity to incorporate physical activity into daily routines (54.5%), emotional states and mood regulation (52.5%), and the ability to set and achieve realistic physical goals (51.5%). In contrast, indicators related to social interaction—such as teamwork, cooperation, leadership, and adherence to principles of fair play—received significantly lower ratings (ranging from 7.1% to 25.3%). This disparity underscores a prevailing tendency among social workers to prioritize individual aspects of physical literacy over its social components. This can be explained by the fact that specialists focus primarily on the individual physical activity indicators of clients and pay less attention to group or team forms of interaction.

These findings partially align with the analysis of international literature, which highlights a connection between physical literacy and the development of social skills – such as teamwork, group interaction, and cooperative play. However, this association is primarily observed within structured settings, including preschool groups, school classes, and groups of children with disabilities. In these contexts,

PL is implemented through preventive or educational programs (particularly physical education) aimed at enhancing self-regulation, prosocial behavior, interpersonal communication, a sense of belonging, and overall mental health and well-being across diverse populations [19]. The publications reviewed demonstrate the existence of causal links between PL and the mental health of children and adolescents [20]. PL promotes resilience and successful adaptation to challenges both within and beyond the school environment, extending throughout the lifespan. It is recognized as a factor that promotes the flourishing of authenticity of personality and contributes to an objectively good, comprehensive, individualized quality of life for a person as an «independent, self-reliant, socially formed subject» who achieves high social results, a high level of life satisfaction and well-being, is more resilient, has higher self-esteem, and a low level of susceptibility to depression, anxiety, and stress [16, 19, 21, 22].

The evaluation of experts' perspectives on the integration of physical literacy (PL) into their professional practice reveals a strong consensus regarding its relevance and applicability. A substantial majority of respondents (84.8%) expressed full agreement with the appropriateness of incorporating PL into their work, while 10.1% indicated partial agreement. Only 1% of participants disagreed, and 4% were undecided. These findings suggest that most professionals, irrespective of the specific client populations they serve, perceive the application of PL as both beneficial and suitable within the context of social work. This is further supported by the generally positive reception of PL as a concept, with only minor variations depending on client characteristics. The highest level of agreement ("Strongly agree") was observed among practitioners working with the most vulnerable groups—such as individuals with terminal illnesses, mental health issues, homeless people, behavioral disorders in children, survivors of human trafficking, and military veterans—where unanimous support (100%) was recorded. The lowest rate of complete agreement was found among those working with survivors of domestic violence (77.8%), although when combined with partial agreement, the overall support rises to 88.9%.

These findings are consistent with international literature, which positions physical literacy as a valuable framework for fostering lifelong engagement in physical activity as a means of unlocking human potential. PL is considered relevant across a wide range of populations, including children, school-aged youth, university students, adults, older individuals, and persons with disabilities. It addresses the needs of participants

in preventive programs aimed at mitigating health risks and reducing the financial burden of treatment and rehabilitation. PL has been shown to support the rehabilitation of children with physical developmental disorders [23], coordination impairments of dystrophic origin [24], and intellectual disabilities [25]. It plays a role in promoting social inclusion among older adults [26], and contributes to the rehabilitation of veterans and combatants who have experienced various forms of injury [14].

The survey of social workers revealed a strong level of support for the integration of physical activity as a component of physical literacy within social work practice. More than three-quarters of respondents (75.8%) indicated that incorporating physical exercise is always or often appropriate in their professional activities. In contrast, only 2% considered it inappropriate, and an additional 3% emphasized objective barriers to implementation. Notably, 9.1% expressed interest in adopting such practices in the future, highlighting the potential for expanding physical activity programs within the social sector. Statistical analysis using the χ^2 criterion did not reveal a significant relationship between attitudes toward the integration of physical activity and work experience or the specifics of the client group ($p > 0.05$), indicating the universal nature of support for this idea.

Social workers' perceptions of the effectiveness of physical activity are predominantly positive. A total of 76.8% of respondents rated physical activity as either effective or highly effective in their professional context, while 18.2% adopted a neutral stance, and only 5% expressed skepticism. Consistent with previous findings, correlation analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between perceptions of effectiveness and professional experience ($p > 0.05$). This outcome reinforces the notion of a broadly shared consensus among practitioners regarding the positive impact of physical activity on clients, irrespective of their length of service or specific area of practice.

These responses align with the perspectives found in scholarly literature, where physical literacy (PL) is widely recognized as a mechanism for enhancing personal health and well-being [10; 16; 18; 26; 27; 28]. The connection between PL and health literacy has also been substantiated [15]. In this context, health is defined in accordance with the World Health Organization's formulation as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, adding to this its significance as a resource for everyday life, and a determinant of quality of life.

Respondents acknowledged the psychological dimension of physical literacy as highly significant. A

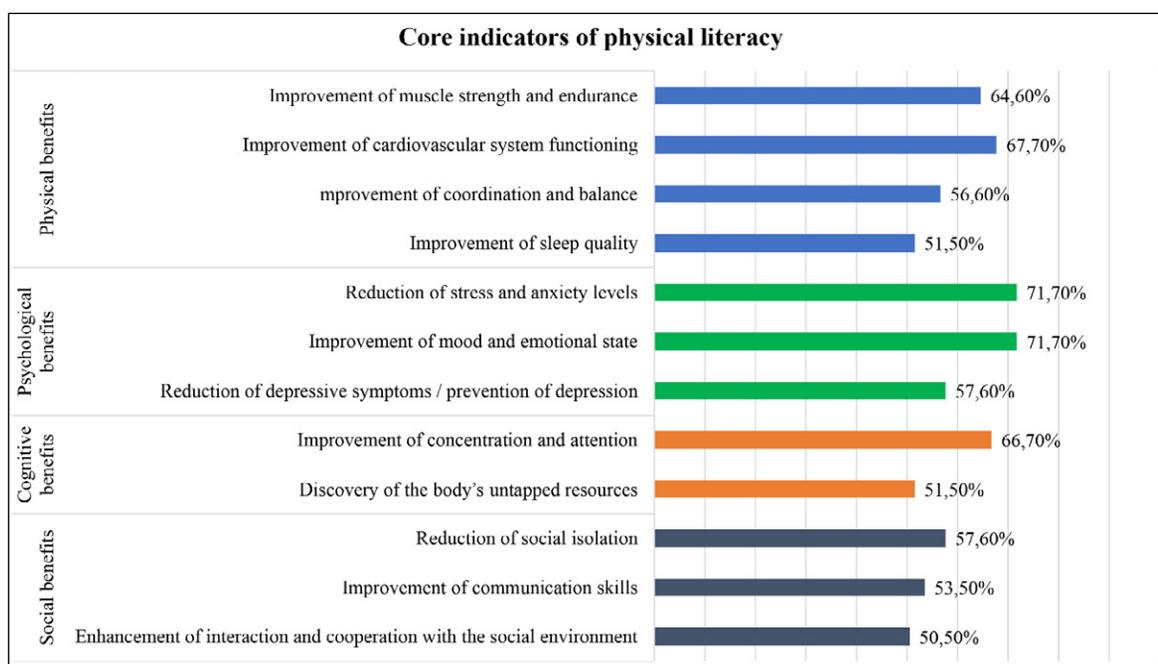


Fig. 1. Core indicators of physical literacy

Picture taken by the authors

substantial majority (96%) agreed that physical activity contributes to improving the psychological state of clients. Less experienced employees were more likely to express «complete agreement,» although no statistically significant differences in terms of experience were found (Pearson's $\chi^2(8) = 8.057$; $p = 0.428$).

Responses to questions regarding activities aimed at enhancing clients' motivation for physical activity revealed a degree of ambivalence among social workers. Only 21.2% reported frequently organizing such activities, while 23.2% indicated occasional engagement. Notably, 44.5% expressed an intention to implement motivational practices in the future, despite not having done so yet. Meanwhile, 11.1% did not perceive a need for such activities, which may reflect existing organizational or methodological barriers to integrating the psychophysical dimension into practice. Statistical analysis using Pearson's chi-square test ($\chi^2(16) = 16.707$; $p = 0.405$) did not identify a significant relationship between professional experience and the implementation of motivational activities, suggesting that attitudes toward such practices are not dependent on years of service.

The majority of respondents (93.9%) believe that physical literacy contributes positively to clients' cognitive functioning, while only 6.1% were undecided. These findings reflect a high level of awareness among professionals regarding the connection between physical activity and mental processes. Although no statistically significant relationship was found between professional experience and these beliefs ($p > 0.05$),

a trend was observed: less experienced practitioners were more likely to "strongly agree," whereas more experienced professionals tended to express their agreement with greater caution.

The link between physical literacy and psychosocial factors—such as resilience and the ability to adapt to challenges within educational settings and beyond—supports the view of physical literacy as a lifelong contributor to personal development, self-actualization, and the realization of an autonomous, holistic personality [21].

Although the social dimension of physical literacy received the lowest ratings among the four core dimensions, its significance was nonetheless affirmed. Specifically, 89.9% of respondents either fully or partially agreed that physical literacy contributes to enhancing clients' social well-being and functioning. Only 5% disagreed with this statement, and 5.1% were undecided. Work experience has no statistically significant effect on professionals' beliefs about the role of physical literacy in improving client well-being ($p > 0.05$).

At the same time, only 44.4% of respondents said that they always or often include teamwork exercises in their physical activity practice. Another 30.3% have never used such exercises but expressed a desire to integrate them in the future. Thus, almost three-quarters (74.7%) of social workers demonstrate real or potential readiness to implement team physical activities in their professional activities. Pearson Chi-Square did not find a statistically significant relationship ($p > 0.05$), and therefore there is a need for support and motivation

for both beginners and experienced professionals to integrate such techniques into their professional practice. This opens up opportunities for training, practical recommendations, and resource assistance for those who want to but do not yet have experience in this area. Ukrainian authors point to the application of PL in the social sphere, in particular, adaptive physical activity in the comprehensive rehabilitation of military personnel and war veterans who have suffered injuries, as well as to promote the social integration of persons with disabilities and other low-mobility groups of the population [14].

Overall, the experts' evaluations of the benefits of implementing physical literacy can be represented through a core set of physical literacy indicators—a set of aspects that respondents identified in the survey as most important for the development of physical literacy in their clients (Fig. 1). This core was established based on professional assessments by social workers across the physical, psychological, cognitive, and social dimensions of physical activity. Indicators selected by more than 50% of respondents represent the components deemed most essential for enhancing clients' health, social integration, and overall well-being. Indicators with a selection frequency below 50% are considered supplementary, playing a secondary role within the broader framework of professional evaluation. Thus, the core of physical literacy indicators reflects the agreed professional position of social workers on the effects of physical activity that have the greatest positive impact on the overall well-being of clients.

Within the physical dimension of physical literacy, social workers most frequently associate its development with improvements in fundamental physiological functions and motor abilities. The most commonly cited benefits include enhanced cardiovascular function (67.7%), increased muscular strength and endurance (64.6%), improved coordination and balance (56.6%), and normalized sleep patterns (51.5%). Additionally, nearly half of the respondents (49.5%) identified immune system strengthening as a relevant outcome. In contrast, indicators such as improved flexibility (29.3%), motor development (28.3%), reduced fatigue (27.3%), enhanced metabolic function (23.2%), and decreased susceptibility to infectious diseases (17.2%) were considered less significant. These findings are consistent with international research, which positions physical activity as a key determinant of health [13], positively correlated with embodied physical competence and various aspects of physical well-being, including activity levels, cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength and endurance, and healthy body composition [27].

Psychological Dimension. Social workers placed high value on the psycho-emotional potential of physical literacy. The most frequently cited outcomes included reduced stress and anxiety (71.7%), improved emotional state and mood (71.7%), and the prevention of depressive symptoms (57.6%). Additionally, 49.5% of respondents noted increased vitality as a key resource-related benefit for clients. Less commonly mentioned were enjoyment of physical activity (39.4%), enhanced motivation and confidence (31.3%), increased self-esteem (28.3%), reduced fatigue (27.3%), prevention of mental disorders (24.2%), and the promotion of goal-setting and self-efficacy (23.2%).

Cognitive Dimension. More than two-thirds of respondents (66.7%) identified improved concentration and attention as the primary cognitive benefit of physical activity. Over half (51.5%) emphasized the discovery of latent physical resources, while 46.5% noted a reduction in the risk of cognitive disorders. However, less emphasis was placed on the development of planning skills, speed of thinking, memory (30.3% each), decision-making ability (22.2%), strategic thinking (19.2%), and analytical skills (10.1%). These results suggest that while the cognitive benefits of physical activity are acknowledged, they are perceived as less central compared to the physical and psychological dimensions.

Social Dimension. Although the social benefits of physical literacy were rated lower than those of the physical, psychological, and cognitive dimensions, they remain relevant in professional practice. The most frequently cited outcomes include reduced social isolation (57.6%), enhanced communication skills (53.5%), and increased interaction with the surrounding environment (50.5%). Less commonly mentioned are the development of teamwork skills (39.4%), strengthening of social connections (38.4%), and the creation of a positive social environment (40.4%). Indicators such as empathy (13.1%), cultural competence (10.1%), and conflict resolution skills (9.1%) are noted with the least frequency.

The social context of physical literacy is closely linked to interpersonal interaction and is associated with increased vitality, energy, and dynamism. It contributes to overall well-being, fosters a sense of agency in working voluntarily with marginalized groups, and supports the development of additional personal capacities. PL enables individuals to feel well and flourish [15]. Its positive impact on the social functioning and social health of older adults has also been documented, particularly in reducing social isolation and loneliness, and enhancing social support networks [29].

DISCUSSION

Despite increasing scientific interest, the concept of physical literacy has not yet been adequately integrated into practice or policy in most European countries. At the global level, PL is recognized in the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030 (GAPPA) as a key construct for addressing physical inactivity and has been proposed by the United Nations as a relevant objective for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals [13]. Recent Ukrainian scholarship has begun to engage with PL in the academic literature [29]. Owing partly to linguistic issues, the term PL in Ukraine is often rendered as “personal physical culture.” Ukraine is among those countries where academic exchange about PL has occurred at the national level—most notably via networks and conferences, but the number of substantive publications remains limited and is largely confined to conference abstracts [13, 14].

European researchers emphasize that the advancement of PL depends primarily on the initiatives and achievements of individuals. In Ukraine, diagnostic instruments for assessing PL in physical education settings have been translated from English; however, PL is scarcely reflected in official health policy documents, and the Sports Federation of Ukraine has not formally endorsed the concept. National documents pertaining to sport, physical activity, health promotion, and education do not currently adopt PL as a coherent, holistic framework. Notwithstanding this absence and the uneven status of PL across Europe, experts anticipate a substantial growth in its prominence in the coming years [13].

Based on the results of an empirical study, the views of the experts surveyed on the implementation of physical literacy regarding key actors and obstacles were as follows. Most respondents place the main responsibility for the implementation and promotion of physical literacy in social work on state institutions. In particular, the most frequently mentioned were the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine (59.6%), the Ministry of Health (52.5%), state institutions and authorities (43.4%), as well as social services and organizations (42.4%). Respondents were much less likely to mention educational institutions that train social workers (27.3%), non-governmental organizations and charitable foundations (26.3%), the Ministry of Education and Science (20.2%), or professional associations and unions of social workers (12.1%). Only 28.3% of respondents believe that responsibility for implementing physical literacy should lie with social workers themselves. This pattern of responses demonstrates a prevailing view of the leading role of the state, while the potential of the professional community, the public sector, and the specialists themselves is rated lower.

Among the main barriers to the implementation of the concept of physical literacy in social work, respondents cited a lack of funding (73.7%), a lack of specially trained personnel (67.7%), and limitations in material and resource support (48.5%). Other significant obstacles include client resistance to change (44.4%), lack of time to include physical activity in the work schedule (33.3%), and insufficient awareness of the importance of physical literacy among colleagues and management (35.4%). At the same time, only 17.2% of respondents consider the difficulty of integrating physical activity into comprehensive care to be a critical issue, which may indicate recognition of the potential of this approach in social work. Other barriers mentioned included limited access to programs and training (24.2%), lack of support from clients’ families (28.3%), and problems at the local community level (28.3%).

CONCLUSIONS

In the challenging circumstances of today, as Ukrainian society continues to fight for its independence and freedom of choice on the battlefield, and as the right to life for every Ukrainian depends on the outcomes of military actions, the issues of health and social inclusion acquire particular significance. Public health, as a strategic resource for national defense, is critically important both on the front lines and in the rear, far from the conflict zone. Moreover, individual health—understood as the unity of physical, mental, social, and spiritual components—is shaped, maintained, and developed not only through medical care but also through interdisciplinary collaboration and personal engagement.

Physical literacy (PL) is considered a vital tool for fostering health and developing a healthy personality. It serves as a means of personal growth through effective and diverse interaction with the social environment and the world, enabled by conscious and confident participation in various forms of physical activity. This engagement supports the development of individual potential, physical abilities, social competence, and overall well-being.

Social workers, as agents of social change, play a significant role in enhancing the personal potential of individuals, families, groups, and communities. By promoting social inclusion and preventing social dysfunction, they facilitate adaptation to rapidly changing and complex environments. Through the integration of physical literacy elements into their practice, social workers can substantially improve the health and well-being outcomes of their clients—especially those at the highest risk of experiencing difficult life circumstances and social exclusion.

The conducted research confirms that social work professionals recognize the potential of PL and express readiness to implement it, primarily as a tool for preserving clients' health. However, there is a noticeable lack of awareness regarding the social dimension of PL as a mechanism for individual growth and social development. This highlights the need to enhance the competencies of social workers in PL-related matters and to emphasize its role in holistic (biopsychosocial-spiritual) health and well-being.

Effective measures in this regard may include professional development courses for social workers and the introduction of new specialized educational and professional programs. Particularly relevant are

the anticipated changes to the classifier of fields of knowledge and specialties, which will guide the training of professionals in higher education institutions starting from the 2025 admission cycle. Specifically, the unification of the fields of knowledge "Health Care and Social Welfare" and "Social Work and Counseling" under a common framework is expected to facilitate the adaptation of social work education programs to address health-related issues, including social problems based on health preservation principles. This integration may also accelerate the adaptation of legislative frameworks to support interdisciplinary collaboration between medical and social work professionals.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declare no conflict of interest

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