

SUMMARY OF HABILITATION THESIS

RESILIENCE, MENTAL HEALTH, AND INCLUSIVE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL WORK

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1. Introduction

Habilitation thesis: **"RESILIENCE, MENTAL HEALTH, AND INCLUSIVE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL WORK"** was born out of an inner and professional journey in which science naturally intertwined with the vocation to understand, accompany, and transform; It is the result of a journey of knowledge in which every university experience, every professional relationship, and every research endeavor became expressions of the same conviction—that education, relationships, and reflection can be forms of healing and growth for the individual and the community.

In recent years, my research interest has shifted more clearly towards social work as a privileged space for analysis and intervention on contemporary psychosocial vulnerabilities. This research direction sought to better understand the social, institutional, and relational contexts that influence the mental health and psychosocial adaptation of individuals and groups.

Recent research has focused on how individual psychological processes interact with social and structural environments, generating either additional risks or protective resources for people in vulnerable situations. Particular emphasis has been placed on mental health in social work, on the role of reflective practices and supervision in supporting professionals, and on trauma-sensitive and inclusion-oriented interventions. This perspective has made it possible to approach vulnerability not as an individual deficit, but as the result of complex dynamics between personal, relational, and institutional factors.

Research interest has also expanded to include the analysis of vulnerable and marginalized groups, with a focus on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, people with disabilities, and social minorities. In this context, psychological well-being is conceptualized as an emergent process, dependent on access to resources, experiences of recognition, and the quality of social-relationships. The approaches developed aim to integrate the psychological dimension with social intervention, promoting support models that foster autonomy, resilience, and social participation.

Through its content, the habilitation thesis aims to reflect a coherent professional and scientific path, centered on values such as integrity, social responsibility, innovation, and interdisciplinary collaboration. At the same time, it offers an integrative perspective on how research can become a tool for a deep understanding of psychosocial phenomena and a source of solutions applicable in community life.

2. Research directions

2.1. Research direction I. Resilience and burnout prevention in the social work profession

The social work profession involves constant exposure to situations of suffering, inequality, and trauma, which places it among the fields with the highest levels of occupational stress. Since the early studies, stress in social work has been described as a complex reaction to multiple professional, bureaucratic, and emotional demands that can affect performance, mental health, and job satisfaction (Gibson, McGrath, & Reid, 1989). Unlike other helping professions, social workers often work with limited resources and face ethical and emotional dilemmas that come with the responsibility of protecting people in extremely vulnerable situations.

Numerous studies have shown that occupational stress in social work has both organizational and individual sources. At the institutional level, administrative pressures, high workloads, and conflicting expectations from organizations and beneficiaries contribute significantly to emotional exhaustion (Storey & Billingham, 2001; Blomberg, Kallio, Kroll, & Saarinen, 2015). At the individual level, personality traits, emotional regulation skills, and social support resources influence how social workers perceive and manage stress. This complex interdependence means that occupational stress cannot be reduced to an exclusively psychological phenomenon, but rather understood as an interaction between the individual and their professional environment.

One of the most frequently discussed aspects in the literature is the phenomenon of burnout, defined as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased sense of professional accomplishment. Lloyd, King, and Chenoweth (2002) highlighted that, in social work, burnout occurs as a result of prolonged exposure to occupational stress without effective coping mechanisms. In particular, working with traumatized or distressed individuals generates a specific form of exhaustion called *secondary traumatic stress* (Bride, 2007). This form of distress

affects social workers' ability to maintain empathy and provide effective support, sometimes leading to avoidance of emotional involvement and decreased job satisfaction.

Another determining factor identified in the literature is the ambiguous and conflicting role of the social worker's professional position. Empirical research has shown that uncertainty about professional responsibilities and lack of managerial support are important predictors of perceived stress (Collings & Murray, 1996; Lloyd, McKenna, & King, 2005). At the same time, ethical pressures, fear of professional errors, and feelings of helplessness in the face of systemic limitations can increase emotional vulnerability. A comparative study by Bradley and Sutherland (1995) showed that, in social services, social workers report higher levels of stress and burnout compared to other social workers, such as home care staff, confirming the specificity of stress in this profession.

Over time, research has begun to distinguish between destructive stress and functional stress, suggesting that a certain level of stress can stimulate adaptation and professional development. Huxley and colleagues (2005) showed that mental health social workers often perceive stress as an integral part of their role, and the ability to manage these pressures becomes an indicator of professional maturity. However, when stress exceeds the capacity for self-regulation and organizational support is insufficient, the risk of burnout and professional abandonment increases significantly.

In the international context, cultural and structural differences considerably influence how social workers experience occupational stress. Comparative studies conducted in Nordic countries show that, although these systems are characterized by developed social protection policies, bureaucratic pressures and increased workloads lead to higher levels of stress and negative attitudes towards the institution (Blomberg et al., 2015). In Asia, research conducted in Hong Kong has shown that social workers engaged in outreach activities face increased psychosocial risks due to a combination of organizational factors and safety concerns, lack of resources, and unclear roles (Sek-Yum, 1993). In the contemporary context, the study conducted by Solomonidou and Katsounari (2022) in Cyprus highlights that social workers in NGOs (), although intrinsically motivated by humanitarian values, face stress generated by precarious contracts, organizational instability, and lack of professional recognition.

Based on these findings, over the last decade, the focus of research has shifted from the analysis of stress to the exploration of resilience as a fundamental resource for protection.

Resilience is defined as the ability to cope with adversity and return to a state of psychological balance after stressful experiences (Collins, 2017). In the social work profession, resilience is not just an individual trait, but a dynamic process involving the interaction between personal resources, social support, and the organizational environment. The study by Rose and Palattiyil (2020) highlights that the development of emotional resilience is essential for professional survival in an institutional context often characterized by administrative pressures and lack of recognition.

Recent research underscores the importance of systematic interventions aimed at cultivating professional resilience. Crowder and Sears (2017) showed that mindfulness programs can help reduce stress and increase resilience in social workers by developing emotional awareness and self-regulation. Similarly, Rose and Palattiyil (2020) demonstrated that organizational factors—such as supervisor support, inclusive institutional culture, and opportunities for professional reflection—amplify emotional resilience and increase job satisfaction.

The concepts of resilience and professional burnout were addressed in the book: **Cădăriu, I.E.** (2025). *Psychosocial resources of mental health specialists. Applied Study*. University Publishing House. ISBN 978-606-28-2117-3.

This research aimed to contribute to the understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying how social workers manage professional stress and maintain their psychological balance. The study, conducted among social workers in Romania, aimed to analyze the relationships between personality traits, psychological resilience, and perceived social support in relation to perceived stress in professional activity, with the results being reported in detail in an applied paper dedicated to the psychosocial resources of mental health specialists (Cădăriu, 2025).

Data analysis revealed a complex relational structure in which internal resources—such as resilience and personality trait configuration—interact with social factors, influencing the level of perceived stress and psychological balance of social work professionals. Overall, the results largely confirmed the initial hypotheses.

First, neuroticism was significantly and positively associated with perceived stress, indicating that individuals characterized by increased emotional sensitivity, worrying tendencies, and affective instability tend to experience the pressures specific to the professional environment more intensely. This result is consistent with the literature, which describes neuroticism as a trait that amplifies psychological vulnerability in stressful contexts (Ormel, Rosmalen, & Farmer, 2004; Paulus, Vanwoerden, Norton, & Sharp, 2016). Furthermore, previous studies show that intense

emotional reactions and difficulties in emotional regulation are more common in people with high levels of neuroticism (Jacobs et al., 2011), supporting the interpretation of the results obtained.

From an applied perspective, these findings suggest that personality traits (neuroticism) may function as psychological risk factors in professions characterized by high emotional exposure and intense relational demands, such as social work. In this context, the results highlight the importance of developing emotional self-regulation skills in the initial and continuing training of social workers as a mechanism for reducing vulnerability associated with personality structure (Cădăriu, 2025).

Resilience was negatively and significantly associated with perceived stress, confirming its protective role. The results obtained are in line with the conclusions drawn by Ozbay et al. (2008) and García-León et al. (2019), who conceptualize resilience not only as a passive capacity for resistance, but as an active process of adaptation, emotional reorganization, and cognitive self-regulation. In the sample analyzed, resilience emerged as an essential variable for maintaining psychological balance in the face of occupational stress, reinforcing the perspective that this dimension can be systematically developed through training, supervision, and professional reflection (Cădăriu, 2025).

Other scientific papers that expand and deepen the analyzed topic also fall within this line of research:

- Watkins Jr, C. E., **Cădăriu, I. E.**, & Vișcu, L. I. (2024). “Let Us Begin Well Together”: A Preparation-Positivity-Purpose Checklist for Helping Beginning Supervisors Optimize the Start of Supervision. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 1-10.
- **Cădăriu, I.-E.**, & Rad, D. (2025). Emotional regulation and burnout prevention: psychological contributions to sustainable social work practice. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 71(1), 233–250. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v71i1.12782>
- Watkins Jr, C. E., Vișcu, L. I., & **Cadariu, I. E.** (2021). Psychotherapy supervision research: On roadblocks, remedies, and recommendations. *European Journal of Psychotherapy & Counselling*, 23(1), 8-25.
- **Cadariu, I. E.**, & Rad, D. (2025). Job involvement and organizational burnout: a gender-sensitive approach in social work. *Technium Soc. Sci. J.*, 72, 438. DOI: 10.47577/tssj.v72i1.12873

2.2. Research direction II. Social work interventions for evidence-based practice in supporting the mental health of beneficiaries

Interventions targeting vulnerable families and communities at risk require an approach that goes beyond fragmented interventions, necessitating the integration of a systemic and ecological perspective on human relationships and life contexts. Such an approach allows for an understanding of the relational and institutional mechanisms that maintain vulnerability and, at the same time, facilitates the development of sustainable intervention strategies in social work practice (Cădariu & Rad, 2025a).

The *Eco-Systemic Structural Family Therapy* (ESFT) model is relevant in this context due to its integrative nature, bringing together ecological systems theory, structural family therapy, and the trauma-informed intervention paradigm. The literature emphasizes that this combination provides a solid conceptual basis for working with multi-stressed families and for coordinating interventions between mental health and social work services (Coffey, 2004; Colapinto, 2019; Eppler, 2019).

Ecosystemic approaches are empirically supported by studies that have demonstrated their effectiveness in improving adherence to intervention and reducing relapse, particularly in contexts characterized by chronic exposure to stress and trauma (Feaster et al., 2010a, 2010b). In this context, integrating ecological interventions into social work practice allows for better coordination between clinical and community interventions, contributing to the well-being of beneficiaries (Cădariu & Rad, 2025a).

The ecosystemic perspective supports the principle of "the person in context," which is fundamental to contemporary social work practice, facilitating the conceptualization of the family and community as dynamic systems that can be reorganized, strengthened, and supported through collaborative and coordinated interventions. Adopting this framework contributes to the development of scientifically informed, trauma-sensitive practices oriented towards the sustainability of change over time (Cădariu & Rad, 2025a).

Continuing this ecosystemic perspective on social work intervention, the analysis was extended to explore applicative models that operationalize ecological intervention not only at the structural level, but also in the daily dynamics of beneficiaries' lives. In this regard, a second study investigated *Ecological Momentary Interventions* as an emerging form of psychosocial

intervention, focused on delivering psychological support in real time and in natural life contexts, with the aim of strengthening the well-being, self-regulation, and adaptability of people in vulnerable situations (Cădăriu & Rad, 2025b).

The approach starts from the premise that psychological distress and social vulnerability do not manifest themselves uniformly or predictably, but fluctuate depending on contexts, relationships, and life events, which calls for flexible interventions that are sensitive to the moment and situation (Cădăriu & Rad, 2025b). In this framework, ecological interventions are conceptualized as forms of psychological support delivered in real time, which allow the subjective experience to be captured precisely at moments of emotional activation or increased risk. By anchoring itself in everyday life, the intervention is no longer perceived as an isolated event, but as a continuous process of support, self-regulation, and adaptation. The ecological dimension of the intervention thus allows for a more faithful approximation of the beneficiaries' lived reality, reducing the discrepancy between the therapeutic setting and the concrete experience of vulnerability. Through contextualized micro-interventions, individuals are supported in recognizing and managing states of distress before they turn into stable dysfunctional patterns. This intervention logic is consistent with trauma-informed perspectives, which emphasize preventing the escalation of symptoms and strengthening internal resources rather than late reactive intervention (Cădăriu & Rad, 2025).

The study also highlights the potential of ecological interventions to extend the helping relationship beyond face-to-face meetings without replacing the role of the professional. Psychosocial intervention is thus reconceptualized as a distributed process, in which direct human contact is complemented by digital forms of support designed to maintain the continuity and consistency of the intervention. This perspective is particularly relevant in contexts characterized by limited access to services, social instability, or increased mobility of beneficiaries.

Trauma-informed interventions represent, in contemporary social work practice, not just a set of clinical techniques, but an integrative paradigm that reconfigures the way we understand human suffering, helping relationships, and the ethical responsibility of professionals. The study analyzed proposes an interdisciplinary approach to trauma-informed interventions, based on the convergence of counseling, ethics, and philosophical reflection, emphasizing the need to move beyond a strictly symptomatic perspective on trauma (Runcan, Runcan, Rad, Cădăriu, 2025).

An essential contribution of the study is the comparative analysis of five trauma-informed intervention models relevant to social work practice: *The Sanctuary Model*, *ARC Framework*, *Narrative Exposure Therapy*, *Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*, and *Somatic Experiencing*. These models are presented not only from the perspective of clinical effectiveness, but also from that of their ethical and philosophical coherence. Each approach illustrates a distinct way of operationalizing trauma-informed principles, from organizational and systemic interventions to body-centered, narrative, or cognitive restructuring interventions.

The analysis highlights that *The Sanctuary Model* (Bloom, 2013) proposes a cultural change at the institutional level, recognizing trauma as a systemic phenomenon and emphasizing the role of organizations in maintaining or diminishing suffering. A distinctive feature of the model is its emphasis on preventing retraumatization of both beneficiaries and professionals. Trauma is recognized as a factor that affects the organizational climate, and the lack of an informed approach to trauma can lead to the perpetuation of coercive, punitive, or dehumanizing practices. Therefore, the Sanctuary Model promotes a reflective institutional culture in which emotions, relationships, and power processes are explicitly analyzed.

The ARC Framework (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2017) is a relational and developmental model designed for working with children and adolescents exposed to complex trauma, particularly in contexts of neglect, abuse, or relational instability. The model is based on the observation that early trauma simultaneously affects attachment systems, self-regulation capacity, and the development of adaptive skills, requiring integrated and developmentally sensitive interventions.

The structure of the model is organized around three central domains: attachment, self-regulation, and competence. The attachment dimension aims to strengthen secure and predictable relationships between the child and caregivers, emphasizing emotional availability, sensitivity, and co-regulation. Self-regulation refers to the development of the ability to recognize and manage emotional and behavioral states, which is considered an essential condition for adapting to environmental demands. The competence dimension aims to strengthen the cognitive, social, and identity skills necessary for adaptive functioning.

Narrative Exposure Therapy (Schauer, Neuner, & Elbert, 2011) is a structured, short-term intervention initially developed for people exposed to repeated trauma and extreme h , such as organized violence, war, or forced migration. The model is based on the integration of cognitive-

behavioral principles with narrative and hermeneutic approaches, with trauma being conceptualized as a fragmentation of autobiographical memory and identity meaning.

The intervention involves reconstructing a coherent life narrative in which traumatic events are integrated chronologically into the context of the person's biography. Through the process of narrative exposure, traumatic memories are reactivated in a safe and structured setting, facilitating emotional processing and reducing post-traumatic stress symptoms. The focus is not exclusively on reliving the experience, but on contextualizing it in relation to the entire life history.

NET is strongly anchored in the ethical principles of trauma-informed practice, particularly with regard to respect for the person's autonomy and dignity. The beneficiary is recognized as the author of their own narrative, and the therapeutic process is guided by their pace and tolerance. From a philosophical perspective, the intervention capitalizes on the hermeneutic dimension of meaning, with trauma being approached as a rupture in the narrative continuity of identity.

The literature indicates the effectiveness of NET in reducing PTSD symptoms and facilitating emotional integration, especially in populations exposed to multiple traumas. The model is considered relevant to social work due to its cultural adaptability and emphasis on testimony, memory, and symbolic recognition (Schauer et al., 2011).

Trauma-Focused CBT (Cohen & Mannarino, 2015) is one of the most well-validated intervention models for children and adolescents exposed to trauma, supported by a consistent body of empirical evidence. The model integrates the principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy with elements of development and family involvement, with trauma being addressed through a combination of psychoeducation, emotional regulation, and gradual exposure. A central element of TF-CBT is the active involvement of caregivers, recognized as a protective factor in the recovery process. The intervention aims not only to reduce symptoms, but also to improve family relationships and the sense of personal control.

From an ethical perspective, TF-CBT adheres to trauma-informed principles by emphasizing consent, safety, and exposure dosage. Its relevance to social work derives from its applicability in community and institutional contexts, as well as its integration of the family dimension into the therapeutic process (Cohen & Mannarino, 2015).

Somatic Experiencing (Levine, 2024) brings to the fore the bodily dimension of trauma, which is seen as a disruption of the autonomic nervous system rather than an exclusively cognitive or emotional phenomenon. The model starts from the observation that trauma-related survival

responses can remain "stuck" at the somatic level, generating persistent symptoms of hyperarousal or dissociation.

The intervention focuses on developing awareness of bodily sensations and gradually regulating physiological arousal through titration and orientation techniques. The therapeutic process is guided by the principle of titration, avoiding re-exposure to the traumatic event and respecting the person's window of tolerance. The emphasis is on the lived experience rather than on detailed verbalization of the traumatic event.

Beyond the specifics of each model, the study highlights their convergence around common principles: restoring safety, regaining personal control, rebuilding trusting relationships, and valuing the person's internal and external resources. At the same time, the limits of trauma-informed interventions are critically discussed, in particular the risk of retraumatization, the difficulties of implementation in rigid institutional contexts, and the challenges related to the cultural adaptation of models developed in Western contexts.

A distinctive dimension of the work is the integration of philosophical reflection into the analysis of trauma-informed interventions. Phenomenology, hermeneutics, and existential philosophy are used to understand trauma as a lived experience that affects meaning, identity, and relationships with others. From this perspective, healing is conceptualized not only as a reduction of symptoms, but as a process of re-signification, reconnection, and reconstruction of biographical continuity.

In the context of contemporary concerns about mental health and its associated vulnerabilities, scientific research plays a central role in clarifying the risk factors and mechanisms through which effective responses can be developed at the level of psychosocial intervention (Vișcu et al., 2025). The increase in the prevalence of mental health problems, correlated with cumulative exposure to adversity, trauma, and social marginalization, requires an integrated approach that goes beyond strictly clinical frameworks and explicitly includes the social dimension of psychological suffering.

In this context, a recent study analyzed the evolution of scientific knowledge on the relationship between emotional abuse and suicidal behavior over a period of four decades: Vișcu, L. I., Cădariu, I. E., Watkins Jr, E., Constantin, A. C., Delcea, C., & Siserman, C. V. (2025). Forty Years of Knowledge Development on Emotional Abuse and Suicide—AI-Assisted Bibliometric and

Empirical Insights. *BRAIN. Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience*, 16(4), 542-557.

The results of the literature review showed that emotional abuse is one of the most consistent and stable variables associated with depression, self-harm, and suicide, being present across research in fields such as clinical psychology, psychiatry, public health, and social sciences. This finding emphasizes that mental health cannot be understood exclusively through the lens of current clinical symptomatology, but must be related to relational history and adverse experiences in childhood and adolescence.

The empirical component of the study made an important contribution to understanding the dynamics of suicidal risk, highlighting the role of residual depressive symptoms as a significant predictor of suicidal behavior. Even in situations where acute symptoms are apparently alleviated by clinical intervention, the persistence of emotional and cognitive vulnerabilities continues to maintain an increased level of risk. This finding supports the idea that mental health should be approached as a dynamic process, in which symptom relief does not automatically equate to a reduction in psychosocial risk.

Importantly, the study results indicate that risk factors for suicidal behavior cannot be explained solely by clinical variables, such as diagnosis or symptom severity, but are closely linked to negative relational experiences, lack of social support, history of emotional trauma, and difficulties in social adaptation. This perspective places mental health in an ecosystemic framework, in which individual, relational, and social dimensions are deeply interconnected. Therefore, suicide prevention and mental health promotion require interventions that simultaneously target the individual and their social environment.

Based on these findings, the study supports the need for an integrated approach to mental health that explicitly includes social intervention as a fundamental element of suicide risk prevention. Emotional abuse, as an often invisible and underreported form of violence, is closely linked to dysfunctional family contexts, social marginalization, and limited access to resources, all of which are central areas of intervention for social assistance. Thus, mental health no longer appears as an exclusive domain of specialized medical services, but as a responsibility shared between health, education, and social protection systems.

Continuing this line of research focused on mental health in social work, the emphasis shifts to minority groups, for whom psychosocial vulnerabilities are amplified by structural,

relational, and institutional factors. In this context, two recent studies address the mental health of sexual and gender minorities from an integrative perspective, highlighting the role of social environments, inclusion, and educational practices in shaping psychological well-being (Cădăriu et al., 2026; Vișcu et al., 2026):

- **I. E. CĂDARIU** , L. I. VÎȘCU, C. DELCEA , D. V. RAD (2026). Well-Being, Inclusion and Social Environments: Insights from Sexual and Gender Minority Research. Vol. 8, Issue 1, pp. 9-16. Sexology Institute of Romania. DOI: 10.46388/ijass.2026.8.2

- L.I. VÎȘCU, **I.E. CĂDARIU**, C. V. SISERMAN (2026). Sexuality Education Beyond the Classroom: Navigating Risk, Care and Relational Complexity. Vol. 8, Issue 1, pp. 1-8. Sexology Institute of Romania. DOI: 10.46388/ijass.2026.8.1

A central point of the first study mentioned is the conceptualization of mental health as an emergent result of the interaction between identity, social relationships, and structural contexts, rather than as an intrinsic characteristic of the individual (Cădăriu et al., 2026). An analysis of the international literature highlights the fact that the psychological well-being of people belonging to sexual and gender minorities is deeply influenced by experiences of acceptance, recognition, and inclusion, but also by experiences of stigmatization, discrimination, and symbolic or institutional exclusion. From this perspective, psychological distress is understood as a consequence of hostile or ambivalent social environments, rather than as an expression of identity itself.

The synthesized literature indicates a significant transition in contemporary research on the mental health of minorities, from deficient, pathology-centered models to interpretive frameworks that value resilience, protective factors, and inclusion processes. Although minority stress theories remain relevant for explaining the increased risk of anxiety and depression, they are expanded by intersectional and contextual approaches that recognize the diversity of experiences and life trajectories within minority groups (Cădăriu et al., 2026). In this sense, inclusion is conceptualized as a continuous, dynamic process conditioned by variable social and institutional contexts.

Another key element of the first article is the analysis of stigmatization and microaggression processes and their impact on mental health. The results indicate that repeated exposure to subtle or explicit forms of exclusion contributes to the internalization of stigma, decreased self-esteem, and increased psychological distress. These cumulative mechanisms explain the persistence of emotional vulnerabilities even in contexts where acute episodes of discrimination are not present, highlighting the importance of preventive interventions focused on the social and relational climate (Cădăriu et al., 2026).

The second study complements this perspective by reconceptualizing sexuality education as a space for promoting mental health and psychosocial prevention (Vîșcu et al., 2026). The literature review shows that approaches focused exclusively on reducing biological or behavioral risks are insufficient to support the psychological well-being of children and adolescents. Instead, relational approaches are highlighted, which integrate emotional, ethical, and social dimensions of development, contributing to the formation of reflective skills and the consolidation of relational safety.

From a mental health perspective, this reconceptualization is particularly relevant, as education that allows for discussion of consent, personal boundaries, identity diversity, and healthy relationships reduces the risk of internalizing stigma and developing emotional distress. Thus, sexuality education is approached as a protective factor with the potential to reduce psychosocial vulnerabilities in the long term, especially for young people belonging to sexual and gender minorities (Vîșcu et al., 2026).

Viewed together, the two studies support an approach to mental health that goes beyond reactive and individualized interventions, highlighting the central role of inclusion, recognition, and relational safety in preventing psychological distress. For social work, these perspectives offer a coherent framework for intervention, in which the promotion of mental health is closely linked to the transformation of the social, educational, and institutional environments that structure the experience of vulnerability (Cădariu et al., 2026; Vîșcu et al., 2026).

Works carried out in this direction:

- Cădariu, I.-E., & Rad, D. (2025). Digital bridges for human support: a review of online psychological interventions in social work contexts. *Technium Sustainability*, 9, 107–123. <https://doi.org/10.47577/sustainability.v9i.12846>
- Cădariu, I.-E., & Rad, D. (2025). Ecological momentary interventions in social work: a psychological approach to enhancing client well-being. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 71(1), 269–284. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v71i1.12781>
- Cădariu, I.-E., & Rad, D. (2025). Systemic healing for complex families: a review of the eco-systemic structural family therapy model in social work and psychological practice. *Technium Sustainability*, 9, 124–140. <https://doi.org/10.47577/sustainability.v9i.12848>
- Cădariu, I.-E., Gavrilă-Ardelean, M., & Gavrilă-Ardelean, G. (2025). Mindfulness as a psychosocial intervention tool: Empirical evidence and practical models in social work. In I.-E. Cădariu & A. Müller-Fabian (Eds.), *Psychosocial dynamics in education and social work*. University Publishing House (pp. 35–48). ISBN 978-606-28-2111-1
- Cădariu, I.E. (2025). Navigating existential themes: social workers' perspectives on developing therapeutic presence through supervision. *International Journal of Social and Educational Innovation (IJSEIro)*

- **I.E. CĂDARIU** , L. I. VÎȘCU, C. DELCEA , D. V. RAD (2026). Well-Being, Inclusion and Social Environments: Insights from Sexual and Gender Minority Research. Vol. 8, Issue 1, pp. 9-16. Sexology Institute of Romania. DOI: 10.46388/ijass.2026.8.2
- L.I. VÎȘCU, **I.E. CĂDARIU**, C. V. SISERMAN (2026). Sexuality Education Beyond the Classroom: Navigating Risk, Care and Relational Complexity. Vol. 8, Issue 1, pp. 1-8. Sexology Institute of Romania. DOI: 10.46388/ijass.2026.8.1
- Runcan, P., Runcan, R., Rad, D., & **Cădăriu, I. E.** (2025). Trauma-informed interventions in social work: ethical grounding, philosophical reflections, and interdisciplinary practices. *Interdisciplinary Research in Counseling, Ethics and Philosophy-IRCEP*, 5(13), 1-28.
- Vîșcu, L. I., **Cădăriu, I. E.**, Watkins Jr, E., Constantin, A. C., Delcea, C., & Siserman, C. V. (2025). Forty Years of Knowledge Development on Emotional Abuse and Suicide—AI-Assisted Bibliometric and Empirical Insights. *BRAIN. Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience*, 16(4), 542-557.

2.3. Research Area III. Psychosocial Factors and Intervention Strategies for Preventing School and University Dropout

The transition from pre-university to university education is one of the most important periods of transformation in the life of a young adult. This stage is marked by complex adaptation processes involving cognitive, emotional, social, and motivational dimensions. In the literature, one of the most influential conceptual frameworks for college adaptation was proposed by Baker and Siryk (1986), who developed the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)—a tool that operationalizes four essential dimensions of academic adjustment: academic adaptation, social adaptation, emotional adaptation, and institutional attachment. The model proposed by Baker and Siryk starts from the premise that academic success depends not only on cognitive abilities, but also on the student's ability to adjust to the multiple demands of the university environment.

Research on student academic adjustment has highlighted the importance of psychosocial processes involved in educational success and in preventing vulnerabilities associated with university dropout. Empirical analyses have shown that academic self-efficacy, satisfaction with specialization, perceived stress, and social support are interdependent variables that shape students' academic trajectories, influencing both academic performance and social integration in the university environment (Cădăriu & Rad, 2023).

The results indicate that academic self-efficacy plays a central role in adapting to educational requirements, functioning as a mediating mechanism between satisfaction with specialization and academic adaptation. Students who show a high level of confidence in their own

abilities to cope with academic demands demonstrate better stress management skills, increased involvement in learning activities, and more stable intrinsic motivation. In this sense, academic self-efficacy is not only an individual cognitive resource, but also a psychological factor with a significant impact on overall functioning in the educational environment (Cădariu & Rad, 2023).

From a psychosocial perspective, academic self-efficacy correlates with higher levels of social integration and active participation in formal and informal support networks within the university. Students who perceive themselves as academically competent tend to seek support when encountering difficulties, develop functional relationships with peers and faculty, and exhibit a stronger sense of institutional belonging. In contrast, low levels of self-efficacy are associated with avoidance of supportive interactions, social withdrawal, and increased vulnerability to educational and social exclusion.

These findings support the idea that academic adjustment should be understood as a multidimensional process that integrates cognitive, emotional, and relational components. The transition to university, especially in the first years of study, is a critical period of adjustment in which perceived social support plays a decisive role. The lack of this support, coupled with low academic self-efficacy, can amplify perceived stress and contribute to the intention to drop out of university (Cădariu & Rad, 2023).

Given that dropping out of university has consequences not only at the psychological level but also at the social level, it is relevant to identify the risk and protective factors in continuing studies (Cădariu, 2024). From a social perspective, student risk profiles can be understood as expressions of **structural** and **psychosocial vulnerabilities** that hinder optimal integration into the university environment. Socio-economic factors constitute a first category of risk: young people from low-income families or marginalized communities often face difficulties in covering living costs and academic expenses. The need to combine study with a part-time or full-time job often leads to exhaustion, absenteeism, and poor academic performance. In the absence of institutional support policies—such as social scholarships, mentoring programs, or career counseling—the risk of dropout increases significantly.

At the same time, poor performance in pre-university education and a lack of self-regulated learning skills can translate into difficulties in adapting to university life. From a social welfare perspective, this requires preventive interventions as early as high school, through vocational guidance, parental education, and career counseling programs that contribute to the development

of autonomy and educational resilience in future students. A distinct category of risk is digital vulnerability—excessive use of social media and dependence on technology can function as mechanisms of emotional avoidance and psychological decompensation. Mental health issues are another predictor of dropout risk. Students who experience anxiety, depression, emotional adjustment difficulties, or high levels of stress may develop a fragile institutional attachment and perceive the university environment as hostile. The lack of psychological prevention programs and collaboration between university centers and community social services increases the risk of isolation and educational failure.

In contrast, success profiles are defined by the existence of individual, family, and institutional **protective factors** that support academic and social adjustment. A first indicator of success is the perception of support from the faculty—an institution that communicates effectively with students, provides quick solutions to administrative difficulties, and promotes professional relationships based on respect and trust contributes to strengthening institutional attachment.

Family support also remains a significant resource in the transition to university life. Students from supportive families that offer encouragement, emotional stability, and decision-making autonomy develop increased resilience to academic stress. In social work interventions, it is important that the family be included as a partner in the educational support process, not only as a source of financial support, but also as a co-responsible actor for the emotional balance of young people.

Another specialist article investigated in depth the role of social workers in preventing school dropout through a systematic and critical analysis of evidence-based interventions carried out at international and national level (Cădăriu & Rad, 2025). The main objective of this research was to identify the most effective strategies for preventing early school leaving by capitalizing on scientifically validated best practices and adapting them to the context of the Romanian educational system. At the individual level, we analyzed interventions targeting students in risk groups—young people who exhibit emotional difficulties, absenteeism, poor performance, or withdrawal behaviors. The studies included in my review show that individual counseling, mentoring, and motivational interviewing techniques significantly contribute to increasing internal motivation and a sense of belonging (Iachini et al., 2016; Vargas-Madriz & Konishi, 2021).

With regard to family interventions, I have emphasized the importance of involving parents in educational processes and strengthening communication between family and school. Numerous

international studies (Franklin & Streeter, 1992; Wilson et al., 2011; Rusmaniah et al., 2021) confirm that active partnership with the family significantly reduces the risk of dropout, especially in disadvantaged or economically unstable environments. In this regard, we have shown that home visits, parental counseling sessions, and parent training programs can become essential tools for social intervention, through which social workers contribute to restoring family balance and strengthening the educational role of parents.

Work carried out in this direction:

- Cădăriu, I. E., & Rad, D. (2023). Predictors of Romanian psychology students' intention to successfully complete their courses—A process-based psychology theory approach. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(7), 549.
- Cădăriu, I. E., & Rad, D. (2025). Mapping the Whole School Approach in social and emotional learning and wellbeing: a bibliometric review with implications for social work and education. *Technium Soc. Sci. J.*, 72, 169.
- Cădăriu, I. E., & Rad, D. (2025). The Role of Social Workers in Preventing School Dropout: An Evidence-Based Review of Interventions. *Technium Soc. Sci. J.*, 70, 292.
- Cădăriu, I. E. (2022). Students' adjustment to university life during the COVID 19 pandemic. *Romanian Journal of Legal Medicine*, 30, 204-207.
- Cădăriu, I. E. (2025). Psychological intervention to increase academic self-efficacy and regulate stress in first-year students. In D. Rad, T. Dughi, R. Maier, F. Golu, D. Birle, O. Toderici, & V. Ardelean (Eds.), *A behavioral sciences perspective on digital well-being* (pp. 97-105). Peter Lang Verlag. Retrieved Feb 28, 2025, from [Peter Lang Verlag - A behavioral sciences perspective on digital well-being](#)
- Cădăriu, I. E. (2025). Predictors and characteristics of college adaptation. In D. Rad, T. Dughi, R. Maier, F. Golu, D. Birle, O. Toderici, & V. Ardelean (Eds.), *A behavioral sciences perspective on digital well-being* (pp. 105-113). Peter Lang Verlag. Retrieved Feb 28, 2025, from [Peter Lang Verlag - A behavioral sciences perspective on digital well-being](#)

2.4. Research direction IV. The role of supervision in the construction and development of social worker identity

The development of professional identity is an essential process in the training of future social workers, involving not only the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and technical skills, but also the integration of personal, social, and emotional dimensions in relation to the profession. In the research conducted together with Rad (2024), we analyzed the process of constructing and developing the professional identity of social workers from an interdisciplinary perspective. After analyzing the specialized literature, we arrived at several relevant aspects:

Studies in the literature emphasize that professional identity is closely linked to internal motivations, career goals, and the perception of the meaning of work, having a dynamic and adaptive character (Creed & Hennessy, 2016; Hirschi, 2011; McLarnon et al., 2015). In social work, this vocational dimension is deeply rooted in values such as human dignity, social responsibility, and commitment to social justice, which give professional identity a distinct ethical dimension.

The formation of professional identity is significantly influenced by educational processes and transitions between different practice settings. The transition from academic training to professional practice involves a restructuring of identity, in which theoretical knowledge is integrated with direct experience and reflection on the professional role (Akkerman & Bakker, 2012). The stability of vocational identity is supported by active involvement in the training process and opportunities for reflection provided by the institutional environment (Kvaskova et al., 2023). In this context, professional supervision plays an essential role, facilitating the process of internalizing the values of the profession and consciously assuming the role of social worker. A central dimension of professional identity is the orientation towards social justice and empowerment. The literature highlights that professional identity is shaped by awareness of structural inequalities and how professionals position their practice in relation to them (Duffy et al., 2016). In this sense, assuming a critical professional identity involves not only conforming to institutional norms, but also the ability to reflect on the limits of the system and negotiate spaces for professional autonomy (Avnoon & Sela-Sheffy, 2021; Corlett et al., 2024). Supervision provides a privileged setting for exploring these tensions, allowing for the analysis of ethical dilemmas and conflicts between personal values and organizational constraints.

Professional identity is directly strengthened in daily practice through a continuous reflective process. Studies show that *human service* professions require a constant balance between personal values and institutional norms, with professional identity being supported by the ability to reflect on the meaning of work and the relationship with beneficiaries (Mancini et al., 2015).

Professional supervision is an essential pillar in the training, development, and maintenance of professional competence in *human service* fields, playing a central role in ensuring the quality of intervention and protecting the mental health of practitioners. Contemporary literature emphasizes that supervision cannot be reduced to an administrative or evaluative

function, but is a complex, relational, and transformative educational process that supports the continuous development of professional identity (Vişcu et al., 2023).

From a competency-based training perspective, supervision is conceptualized as a structured framework for developing the clinical, reflective, and ethical skills of professionals. Competency-oriented training models highlight the importance of clarifying expectations, learning objectives, and assessment criteria, thus facilitating a transparent and accountable learning process (Vişcu et al., 2023). In this sense, supervision contributes to strengthening professional safety and preventing maladaptive or unethical practices.

A significant contribution to recent literature is the conceptualization of supervision as an invitational and empowering process. The ICEE-T (Invitational, Clarifying, Educational, Empowering, and Transparent) model emphasizes the role of supervision in creating a safe relational space characterized by clarity, collaboration, and shared responsibility (Watkins Jr et al., 2024a). The written supervision agreement proposed in this framework is not just a formal tool, but an expression of relational ethics that supports the autonomy of the supervisee and prevents ambiguities of role or power.

Beyond its formative dimension, supervision plays an essential role in transformative professional development. The extension of Hoggan's taxonomy of transformative learning outcomes to supervision highlights the fact that supervisors and supervisees not only acquire technical skills, but also experience profound changes at the cognitive, emotional, relational, and identity levels (Watkins Jr et al., 2024b). These transformations support self-reflection, tolerance for complexity, and the integration of difficult experiences in practice into a coherent professional narrative.

In the context of professions exposed to intense relational and emotional stress, supervision also functions as a mechanism for protecting mental health. By normalizing emotional experiences, processing difficulties in practice, and supporting the meaning of work, supervision contributes to preventing professional burnout and maintaining long-term ethical commitment. Thus, supervision becomes not only a quality control tool, but a fundamental condition for professional sustainability and the quality of psychosocial interventions (Vişcu et al., 2023; Watkins Jr et al., 2024a; Watkins Jr et al., 2024b).

Works carried out in this direction:

- Cădăriu, I.-E., Vișcu, L.-I., Müller-Fabian, A., & Andrioni, F. (2025). *Transformative education in the training of social workers: Reflection, meaning, and professional development* (pp. 9–17). In I.-E. Cădăriu & A. Müller-Fabian (Eds.), *Psychosocial dynamics in education and social work*. Editura Universitară. ISBN 978-606-28-2111-1
- Cădăriu, I.E., & Vișcu, L.I. (2025). *Existential psychotherapy. An integrative approach for psychotherapists and social workers*. University Publishing House Bucharest. ISBN 978-606-28-1975-0
- Cădăriu, I.E., & Vișcu, L.I. (2025). *Ethical Landmarks in Psychotherapy and Social Work*. Bucharest University Press. ISBN 978-606-28-1999-6
- Vișcu, L. I., Cădăriu, I. E., & Watkins Jr, C. E. (2023). *Competency-based training for clinical supervisors*. Elsevier.
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- Watkins Jr, C. E., Cădăriu, I. E., & Vișcu, L. I. (2024). Extending Hoggan's taxonomy of transformative learning outcomes to psychotherapy supervisor development. *International Journal of Supervision in Psychotherapy*, 6, 7-21.

2.5. Research direction V. Professional reflexivity and inclusive practices in social work

In the context of contemporary social transformations, social work is called upon to respond to increasingly complex forms of vulnerability, characterized by cultural diversity, structural inequalities, existential suffering, and persistent ethical tensions. In this framework, professional reflexivity emerges as a central mechanism for maintaining inclusive, ethical, and context-sensitive practice. Recent research emphasizes that reflexivity is not only an individual competence, but also a relational and institutional process that supports the ability of professionals to integrate the complexity of social realities into their interventions (Cădăriu & Marici, 2025a).

From an educational and training perspective, reflective practice is conceptualized as an inclusive methodology that facilitates the integration of multiple perspectives and the development of critical thinking among social work students and practitioners. Theoretical analyses highlight that reflexivity goes beyond descriptive self-reflection, involving the examination of power positions, personal values, and institutional assumptions that shape social intervention. Thus, reflexivity becomes a tool for mediating between lived experience, theoretical knowledge, and ethical responsibility, contributing to the formation of a flexible and responsible professional identity (Cădăriu & Marici, 2025a).

Continuing this perspective, the analysis is deepened by focusing on social work practices for people with disabilities, where the relationship between reflexivity and inclusion becomes particularly visible. The article, which focuses on the development of rights-based practice, highlights the fact that social intervention with these groups requires a critical re-evaluation of the traditional professional framework, which is often marked by paternalistic or deficit-centered approaches. In this context, professional reflexivity is conceptualized as an indispensable mechanism for recognizing persons with disabilities as active subjects of intervention and for supporting their autonomy, participation, and self-determination, in line with an inclusive and rights-based approach (Cădăriu & Marici, 2025b).

Within this framework, rights-based practice is analyzed as a paradigm shift in social work, which involves a transition from interventions predominantly oriented towards protection and care to interventions focused on autonomy, participation, and social recognition. People with disabilities are approached not as passive recipients of social services, but as social actors with full rights, whose experiences, choices, and perspectives must be actively integrated into the intervention process. This change requires a reflective repositioning of the professional, who is called upon to examine their own assumptions about dependence, competence, and normality (Cădăriu & Marici, 2025b).

The analysis highlights that many of the difficulties encountered in practice with persons with disabilities do not stem from their functional limitations, but from social, institutional, and attitudinal barriers that restrict access to resources, participation, and self-determination. In this sense, disability is conceptualized as a social and relational construct, and social intervention becomes a process of negotiation between individual needs and existing social structures. Professional reflexivity plays a central role in identifying these barriers and avoiding the reproduction of practices that, although well-intentioned, can perpetuate dependence and exclusion (Cădăriu & Marici, 2025b).

An essential aspect of inclusive practice is the management of power relations implicit in social intervention. Rights-based practice involves recognizing the power asymmetry between the professional and the beneficiary and engaging in a deliberate process of reducing this asymmetry through dialogue, transparency, and co-decision-making. Reflexivity allows the professional to analyze how decisions, language, and institutional frameworks influence a person's autonomy, contributing either to strengthening or diminishing their ability to exercise their rights.

As an extension of the analysis of inclusive and rights-oriented practices, the research direction is expanded to explore the existential and spiritual dimensions of social intervention, often considered marginal or difficult to operationalize in professional practice. Articles dedicated to these topics highlight the fact that working with profound vulnerability brings to the fore questions related to meaning, suffering, hope, loss, and identity, which influence both the experience of beneficiaries and the professional positioning of social workers (Cădăriu & Marici, 2025c; Cădăriu, 2025).

An analysis of the challenges associated with spirituality in social work practice shows that this dimension cannot be addressed through standardized techniques or prescriptive interventions. Spirituality is conceptualized as an integral part of the human experience, closely linked to values, beliefs, and personal ways of giving meaning to suffering and life transitions. In this context, inclusive practice involves recognizing the diversity of spiritual expressions and avoiding both ignoring this dimension and imposing external value frameworks. Professional reflexivity becomes essential for maintaining an ethical stance that allows for the exploration of spiritual themes in a respectful, person-centered manner aligned with the principles of autonomy and dignity (Cădăriu & Marici, 2025c).

The literature reviewed also highlights that the difficulty of integrating spirituality into practice often stems from a lack of reflective training and professionals' fears of overstepping the boundaries of their professional role. In the absence of clear frameworks for reflection and supervision, spiritual issues may be either avoided or treated superficially, which limits the ability of the intervention to fully respond to the needs of the beneficiaries. In this sense, reflective supervision is identified as a privileged space for clarifying ethical boundaries, exploring the professional's personal values (), and developing an authentic and responsible professional presence (Cădăriu & Marici, 2025c).

The article dedicated to existential themes deepens this perspective, analyzing how confronting the meaning of life, finitude, responsibility, and moral suffering influences the helping relationship and the development of the social worker's therapeutic presence (Cădăriu, 2025). Existential themes frequently arise when working with people experiencing loss, illness, exclusion, or identity crisis, requiring a form of intervention that is not based exclusively on problem solving, but on the ability to "remain" relationally with the beneficiary. In this context, therapeutic presence is conceptualized as a complex relational competence, built through self-reflection, tolerance of

uncertainty, and the ability to sustain difficult dialogues without resorting to premature solutions. Supervision plays a central role in the development of this presence, providing a space to explore the emotional and existential impact of practice on the professional. Through supervision, existential themes can be integrated into a coherent professional narrative, preventing emotional exhaustion and defensive withdrawal (Cădăriu, 2025).

Viewed holistically, the articles on disability, spirituality, and existential themes reinforce the idea that inclusive practices in social work cannot be reduced to technical skills or normative frameworks. They require deep reflection, capable of integrating difference, suffering, and meaning into an ethical and relational intervention. Professional supervision thus emerges as a cross-cutting mechanism for supporting inclusive practice, facilitating the development of a mature professional identity that is sensitive to the complexity of human experience and oriented toward social justice.

Works carried out in this direction:

- CĂDĂRIU, I. E., & MARICI, M. (2025). REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AS AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL METHODOLOGY: INTEGRATING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING. *International Journal of Social and Educational Innovation (IJSEIro)*, 12(24), 373-383. Retrieved from <https://www.journals.aseiacademic.org/index.php/ijsei/article/view/567>
- CĂDĂRIU, I. E., & MARICI, M. (2025). TOWARD INCLUSIVE AND RIGHTS-BASED SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. *International Journal of Social and Educational Innovation (IJSEIro)*, 12(24), 481-491.
- CĂDĂRIU, I.-E., & MARICI, M. (2025). THE CHALLENGES OF SPIRITUALITY IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE. *International Journal of Social and Educational Innovation (IJSEIro)*, 12(23), 275-280. Retrieved from <https://journals.aseiacademic.org/index.php/ijsei/article/view/479>
- Cădăriu, I.E. (2025). Navigating existential themes: social workers' perspectives on developing therapeutic presence through supervision. *International Journal of Social and Educational Innovation (IJSEIro)*

3. Future perspectives and academic career development plan

3.1. Objectives in the academic development plan

My academic career planning is based on the belief that university education goes beyond the transmission of knowledge, constituting a continuous process of identity formation, professional development, and reflective transformation. My experience in the fields of clinical

psychology, psychotherapy, and social work has helped shape an integrative vision of university education, centered on relationships, interdisciplinarity, and ethical responsibility.

The development plan for the coming years is structured around several complementary strategic directions: teaching excellence, academic leadership development, and promoting a reflective and ethical culture in specialist training.

The first direction focuses on the continuous development of teaching skills and reflective training. I intend to deepen the use of educational strategies centered on experiential learning, guided reflection, and formative assessment in order to stimulate critical thinking, professional responsibility, and relational empathy. I will also continue to develop practical teaching resources—course guides, working materials, and case studies—to support the integration of theory and practice. An important component of this direction is the development of a university mentoring framework for young lecturers, doctoral students, and practitioners in training, with the aim of cultivating academic dialogue and continuous reflection.

The second direction concerns the development of academic and institutional leadership. As director of the Department of Psychology at Tibiscus University in Timișoara and vice president of IPCS, I aim to contribute to the consolidation of an organizational culture based on collaboration, academic quality, and educational innovation. This role involves taking responsibility for developing study programs, supporting collective research, and promoting ethical and transparent institutional practices.

The third direction focuses on promoting a reflective and ethical culture in the training of specialists. Clinical supervision and reflective training remain central landmarks of my academic identity. I will continue to integrate this vision into my teaching, research, and leadership activities by creating educational spaces characterized by relational safety, trust, and professional creativity. Continuing my previous research on burnout prevention and professional sustainability, I intend to develop a complex predictive model of emotional regulation, mental health, and professional resilience among social work specialists.

3.2. Scientific research objectives

The emotional balance of social workers cannot be reduced to the individual dimension, but represents a multi-level process influenced by personal and organizational factors.

Future prediction models will consider a multi-level approach to the mental health of professionals in the helping fields, integrating individual, relational, and organizational factors.

At the individual level, research will focus on the role of emotional regulation, self-compassion, and mindfulness as essential psychological resources in preventing professional burnout. The interest is directed toward clarifying how these competencies support relational stress management, tolerance of ambiguity, and maintaining empathic engagement in a sustainable manner.

At the team level, research directions will focus on the protective function of professional social support and reflective supervision. The contribution of structured spaces for reflection to normalizing difficult emotional experiences, reducing professional isolation, and strengthening the meaning of work will be analyzed. Supervision is conceptualized as a relational process of emotional co-regulation and collective learning, with a direct impact on psychological well-being.

At the institutional level, the research will examine the role of organizational culture in supporting or eroding the mental health of staff. The focus will be on organizational values, leadership styles, and management practices that promote care, cooperation, and professional recognition, with institutions understood as emotional environments, not just administrative ones.

A cross-cutting objective is to develop integrated intervention models that combine individual-centered interventions with organizational development strategies. Mental health is thus approached as a shared responsibility between the individual, the team, and the organization.

Future research will focus on investigating the well-being of people from disadvantaged backgrounds, approaching this dimension in an integrative manner that includes cognitive, emotional, and relational components (). Well-being is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct, reflecting not only general life satisfaction and the presence of positive emotions, but also the ability of individuals to construct personal meaning and experience an authentic sense of social belonging. In the case of vulnerable groups, these dimensions are deeply influenced by structural living conditions, repeated experiences of insecurity, and unequal access to educational and community resources, which justifies the need for an in-depth analysis of psychological well-being in contexts of social marginalization.

Starting from the analysis of risk profiles and psychosocial factors that influence academic adaptation, I propose to deepen the mechanisms through which economic, emotional, and educational vulnerabilities contribute to the risk of dropping out of school and to highlight **the role of social assistance** in preventing this phenomenon. Future research aims to develop an **integrated**

intervention model based on resilience, social support, and educational inclusion, which will facilitate the continuation of the educational path of people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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