

Social Welfare Specialists between Global Challenges and Local Decisions

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During the last five years, both EU and Latvian social welfare specialists have faced at least two new global challenges. One is the COVID-19 pandemic and the other is full-scale war in Europe. Social welfare specialists (social workers, social caregivers, etc.) face various individual or local crises in their daily work. However, new global challenges require changing work organization, methods and especially social interaction with service recipients. The purpose of the article is to study the changes in social workers' social interaction with service users other social welfare specialists due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Empirical research is based on qualitative methodology using in-depth interviews with social welfare specialists and analysis of secondary data sources. The preliminary results allow to highlight the problems of implementing digital communication and difficulties in overcoming communication barriers in the use of languages. Communication difficulties and the use of digital tools affect different groups of service users in different ways. The organization of work and daily demands in social welfare organizations do not always allow social workers the flexibility to change the way of social interaction.