

## ANNOTATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC WORKS

**for participation in a competition for the academic position of Associate**

**Professor** in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal

Sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology

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18 scientific works were submitted for participation in the competition: 1 monograph, 1 published book based on a defended dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree “doctor,” 16 scientific articles, of which 13 in Bulgarian and 3 in English.

The numbering used reflects the consecutive numbers of the publications in the list for participation in the competition.

### Habilitation thesis - monograph

1. *Angelova, D. 2025. The Modern Face of Friendship and Peer Relationships in the Era of the Digital Revolution, Koala Press, ISBN 978-619-261-083-8, Plovdiv, 2025.*

The monograph explores in depth friendship and peer relationships in the context of the digital revolution, linking classical theories of close relationships with new forms of online communication. The relevance of the topic is associated with the massive changes in how we communicate with others, as well as with the effects of the digital revolution that has swept the world. The aim is to outline both the positive and the risky effects of virtual friendships, especially in adolescents, and to formulate questions for future research regarding the role of electronic communication in processes of connection and attachment.

Communication in social networks is so widespread that for many people it is the predominant way of meeting others and maintaining contact. The world of social media has completely changed the meaning of the word “friendship”. In view of the times we live in, refusing to use social networks can be seen as a form of social deprivation. Maintaining contacts through digital devices occupies an increasingly large share of interpersonal communication. More and more new platforms appear, and the age range of their users is constantly expanding. Despite their positive contribution to fast and easy communication, information exchange and access, in recent years the question of their impact on quality of life has taken on increasing importance.

The monograph focuses on friendship ties in virtual space, attempting to outline both the

positive and the less favourable influences on social and emotional development, particularly in young people. The problems discussed point to the need for further research on the role that electronic communication plays in processes related to interpersonal interaction. The monograph includes sections on definitions of friendship, its development through different theoretical approaches, the nature of close relationships, links between friendship, attachment and romantic relationships, as well as friendship as a source of social support and well-being. Concepts from positive psychology, attachment theory and research on happiness and subjective well-being are discussed, with an emphasis on the idea that stable friendships support self-esteem, resilience and coping with stress. The monograph also presents an empirical study with results and analysis focusing on the relationship between friendship, the experience of closeness and the use of social media. The data are used to formulate conclusions about the role of friendship ties as a resource for social support and about the possible transformations of these ties in the digital context.

In conclusion, the main findings are outlined, indicating that friendship remains a key factor for well-being and mental health, but that the digital revolution is transforming the forms of connection and requires a more nuanced understanding of the balance between online and offline relationships. The need for further research is underlined, especially on the conditions under which social media support, rather than replace, authentic closeness and empathy in peer relationships.

**A published book based on a defended dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”**

2. *Angelova, D. 2024. Friendship, Empathy and Self-Esteem, Makros Publishing House, ISBN 978-954-561-621-1, Plovdiv, 2024.*

The book is based on a doctoral dissertation examining the relationships between friendship, empathy and self-esteem in adolescence. It considers the importance of friendship for social, emotional and cognitive development during this period. The functions of friendship are traced, along with its influence on the development of the self, its links with emotional attachment, morality, prosocial behaviour, some of the “dark sides” of friendship, and the roles of empathy and self-esteem in the context of peer relationships in adolescence.

The theoretical constructs presented reflect the transformations that occur in the movement from childhood to adolescence. Empirical studies show that friendship is a form of social relationship that captures changes in emotions, cognitions, identity and later forms of interaction. At the same time, the studies demonstrate that friendship relations themselves depend on numerous subjective phenomena, including empathy and self-esteem.

The first chapter presents a systematic analysis of the constructs under study. Friendship is examined in the context of the ideas of H. Sullivan, J. Piaget, E. Erikson, R. Stamatov, K. Tagareva, W. Bukowski, T. Berndt, W. Hartup, J. Parker, S. Asher, K. Bagwell, M. Schmidt, W. Furman and others, outlining key understandings of friendship and its significance for personality development.

The treatment of empathy builds on the ideas of Hoffman, Davis, Eisenberg, Stamatov and others, and conceptualizes empathy as both an emotional and a cognitive phenomenon. Empathy can unfold at different levels and take different forms – from unconscious to highly conscious – in which the situation of the other is experienced within the horizon of broader life segments. Different empathic responses depend on the involvement of different mechanisms (Hoffman, Davis, Stamatov). Empathy can acquire motivational force and prompt engagement in constructive actions and limitation of destructive actions. The empathic disposition enhances sensitivity, openness and understanding of the other, which in turn is a precondition for building and maintaining social relationships; this directs the inquiry towards the links between empathy and the quality of friendships, and more specifically how empathy shapes the dynamics of these relationships.

The analysis of self-esteem is grounded primarily in Susan Harter’s work. Self-esteem is

presented as both a global and a domain-specific construct; as a non-global construct, it is differently related to the various life domains of the self. Harter's analyses distinguish several domains in which the importance of self-esteem emerges: academic, social, athletic, romantic relationships, friendships and others. Self-esteem may vary across domains, which affects the regulation of social relationships.

The first chapter thus relies on theoretical studies that not only conceptualize these phenomena but also open specific avenues for empirical research. The second chapter presents the empirical study, including aims, tasks and hypotheses, the instruments used and the research procedure, as well as results and analysis. The empirical section includes the development of Bulgarian versions of questionnaires for friendship quality and self-esteem, analysis of their semantic structure and psychometric properties, and examination of the links between friendship, empathy and self-esteem subscales and gender-age differences. The results confirm that high-quality friendships are associated with higher self-esteem, more developed empathy and lower levels of emotional and behavioural difficulties, positioning friendship as a key resource and protective factor in adolescence.

### **Articles and reports published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information**

1. *Angelova, D. 2025. Friendship in the Context of Positive Social Relationships and Subjective Well-Being. Journal of Positive School Psychology, ISSN 2717-7564.*

The study analyses friendship quality as a key factor for subjective well-being among Bulgarian young people aged 18–25, situating the topic within the broader framework of positive social relationships and mental health. A theoretical model is presented in which friendship is defined as a stable, emotionally rich relationship based on trust, intimacy, mutual support and shared positive experiences that performs protective and developmental functions for identity, social adaptation and emotional regulation. Empirically, the study uses a correlational design with 131 participants who evaluate at least one significant friendship using the “My Friendship” questionnaire, composed of five subscales: conflict, support in conflict, communication and understanding, intimacy and trust, positive experiences, plus a total friendship quality index. Descriptive statistics show high mean scores for support in conflict and communication/understanding and low scores for conflict, indicating predominantly positive perceptions of friendships. Correlational analysis reveals strong

positive links between the overall friendship index and support in conflict, communication and understanding, and intimacy and trust, identifying these aspects as central for subjectively perceived quality of the relationship. A moderate positive correlation is found between intimacy/trust and positive experiences, as well as a positive relationship between overall friendship quality and indicators of subjective well-being, partially confirming the hypothesis about the importance of positive, satisfying interactions for the experience of happiness.

The discussion highlights the multifactorial nature of friendship quality (personality traits, communication skills, contextual conditions, etc.) and critically examines limitations such as the use of self-report methods and the relative homogeneity of the sample in age and educational status. Future directions include more complex models incorporating additional psychological and social variables (gender, attachment styles, social anxiety, communication conflicts) and control scales, with the aim of deepening theoretical and applied understanding of friendship in the context of positive psychology.

2. **Angelova, D. 2025.** *Friendship – psychological aspects.* *SAR Journal, Volume 8, Issue 3, pp. 288–292, ISSN 2619-9955, DOI: 10.18421/SAR83-10, September 2025.*

The article analyses friendship as a specific type of close relationship based on reciprocity, mutuality and equality between partners, distinguishing it from family and parent–child relationships. It presents major theoretical frameworks – Sullivan’s interpersonal theory, Bowlby’s attachment theory, social identity theory, Erikson’s psychosocial theory, Selman’s stage model of friendship development, and contemporary models examining the role of co-rumination and gender differences in friendship ties. The paper emphasises the importance of friendship for social learning, identity formation, the development of social-emotional competence and psychological well-being across childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Functions such as emotional support, buffering against stress and influence on self-esteem are discussed, highlighting that high-quality friendships act as a protective factor, whereas their absence is associated with increased risk of anxiety, depressive symptoms and difficulties in social adaptation.

**Articles and papers published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes**

1. **Angelova, D. 2023.** *Psychological counseling in the context of sports practice. In collection: Tenth International Scientific Conference, VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius," ISSN 2534-9317, Veliko Tarnovo, pp. 522-528*

The report examines psychological counseling as a key resource for supporting athletes in the high-stress conditions of modern sport. The text analyzes the factors of mental stress in sport, divided into objective (publicity, media, expectations, competition, trauma) and subjective (overmotivation, fear of failure, insecurity, lack of coping skills, interpersonal conflicts). It is emphasized that the pressure for constant high performance, the risk of injuries, the unstable professional environment and the negative media background often led to emotional overload, anxiety and a decreased sense of well-being.

The report outlines the role of sports psychologists in building a safe space for expression and development, increasing the motivation, emotional resilience and self-efficacy of athletes, as well as in supporting the adaptation of young athletes to professional sports. Emphasis is placed on the triad coach - sports psychologist - athlete, on working with team leaders, strengthening team cohesion and creating a welcoming environment for new players. Specific areas of consultative work are described: structured interviews, monitoring group dynamics, individual and group meetings, team and acceptance training, as well as working with coaches to improve communication. A set of psychological techniques (breathing, positive self-talk, mindfulness, progressive relaxation, visualization) and widely used diagnostic tools in sports psychology (CSAI -2, TEOSQ, PMCSQ2, PMQ, SPQ, AAT, d2R) are presented. The report argues that with an equal level of physical, technical and tactical preparation, it is mental resilience and psychological support that often decide the outcome of the competition. The need for psychological preparation to be a long-term, systematic and integrated part of the overall training program of elite athletes is emphasized.

2. **Angelova, D. 2023.** *Psychological counseling of children and adolescents. In collection: Interdisciplinary training through arts, sports and digital technologies, ISBN 978-619-7663-76-1, Plovdiv University Publishing House, Plovdiv, pp. 175-186*

The report presents the conceptual, methodological and practical foundations of psychological counseling with children and adolescents. The focus is on understanding mental health in childhood and adolescence as more than reducing symptoms – it includes a full life, developing

potential, emotional and social competence. The aim is to systematize basic concepts, approaches and techniques in counseling work, as well as the specifics of the process in different contexts – institutional, educational and private practice. The goals, models and directions of psychological counseling (medical, pedagogical, diagnostic, social; psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, humanistic, family and group counseling) are described. The main stages of the counseling process are examined – initial interview, establishing a contract, collecting anamnesis, developmental assessment, problem formulation and selection of intervention, with specific emphasis on working with children and families.

The text details the content of the primary interview, the domains of development (physical, cognitive, emotional, social, moral, sexual), typical age-related difficulties, and the importance of attachment and family context. Basic techniques and approaches are presented – play therapy, non-directive client-centered play, cognitive-behavioral interventions, family therapy, and projective methods, tailored to age and verbal abilities.

The central role of the therapeutic relationship is emphasized – qualities such as empathy, authenticity, acceptance, warmth and trustworthiness are described as stronger predictors of effectiveness than a specific theoretical school or technique. Key ethical principles are outlined (confidentiality, informed consent, boundaries, supervision) and it is argued that understanding and love for children, dedication to the cause and professional responsibility are core to good consultative practice.

**3. Angelova, D. 2023. *Development of positive relationships in childhood. Quality of friendships. In collection: Mental health and flourishing across the life cycle (Part One), Plovdiv University Publishing House, Plovdiv, pp.19-28, ISBN 978-619-7663-81-5***

The presented article analyzes the development of positive relationships in childhood by empirically investigating the quality of friendships in primary school-age children and its relationship with mental well-being.

The aim is to trace the development and nature of friendship in childhood and to assess the quality of friendship relationships as a form of positive social relationships related to emotions, cognitions and identity. The theoretical part considers friendship as a context for social, cognitive and emotional development, based on Sullivan's interpersonal theory and models of the functions of friendship and its importance for adaptation. The empirical study used the Friendship Quality Scale questionnaire (Bukowski, Boivin & Hoza) with 46 statements, grouped into subscales and subscales, assessing five key aspects: friendship, conflict, help, security and closeness, including balance in relationships. A sample of 60 children aged 9–11

years (equal number of girls and boys) was studied, analyzing positive and negative characteristics of friendships and their interrelationships.

Correlation analysis shows a strong positive relationship between the total score on the positive subscales (friendship, help, support, security, overcoming problems, closeness, reflective assessment) and the perception of friendship quality, as well as a negative relationship with imbalance and conflict. The hypothesis that in friendships with predominantly positive characteristics, children feel more accepted by their peers and show higher levels of psychological well-being is confirmed, with the studied group demonstrating high quality of friendships.

In conclusion, quality friendships in middle childhood promote a sense of belonging, develop social competence, emotional regulation and conflict management skills, reduce anxiety and the risk of bullying. Positive friendships are seen as a protective factor that strengthens self-esteem and well-being and can compensate for adverse influences from the family and school environment.

**4. Angelova, D. 2024. Friendship and positive relationships as a predictor of well-being. In Proceedings: XXIII International Scientific Conference “Applied Psychology and Social Practice”, VFU “Chernorizets Hrabar”, ISSN 1314-8397, University Publishing House, Varna, pp. 29-32**

The publication examines friendship and positive relationships as key predictors of psychological and subjective well-being at different stages of development.

The emphasis is on the role of close friendships for a sense of belonging, connectedness, emotional support and resilience in coping with stress, difficulties and negative experiences. It is emphasized that friendship improves not only mental health and well-being but is also associated with positive effects on physical health. The article describes friendship as a “secret bond” and the embodiment of ideal human qualities - trust, loyalty, generosity, concern for the welfare of others - in the spirit of positive psychology and concepts of positive relationships with others. The links with attachment, prosocial behavior, social competence, emotional regulation, self-concept and coping with social anxiety are discussed. The importance of friendships in childhood and adolescence is examined as a context for socialization, learning of norms, development of social and emotional skills and a prototype for later intimate relationships. The role of family, peers and educational institutions in building skills for living in a community and positive social relationships is emphasized.

The report links positive relationships to altruism, empathy, meaning and personal growth,

highlighting that a sense of support and significance strengthens self-esteem and psychological well-being. It also notes the challenges of the digital age – a disconnect between virtual and “face-to-face” friendships and the limitations of online relationships to provide deep reciprocity, moral responsibility and lasting connectedness.

5. **Angelova, D. 2024.** *Development of empathy in childhood. Positive relationships with peers and parents. In Yearbook of the Faculty of Pedagogy, PAISIY HILENDARSKY PU, Plovdiv University Publishing House, ISSN28154134, pp. 173-186, DOI:10.69085/afp20243173*

The article examines the development of empathy in childhood and its relationship to positive relationships with peers and parents in a theoretical perspective. Empathy is described as a critical skill for successful social and emotional functioning, involving cognitive and emotional components – understanding and empathy for the experiences of others. The role of a positive self-image is emphasized: children who feel accepted and connected to others more easily initiate and maintain positive social relationships. Key definitions of empathy are presented, and it is viewed as a multidimensional construct, uniting cognitive and affective empathy. The stages in the development of empathy are described – from emotional contagion to empathy for abstract groups – and its relationship to prosocial behavior and moral development.

The article summarizes research showing that parenting style, the quality of parent-child relationship and family communication are positively related to children’s empathy. The importance of friendship as a context for developing empathy is emphasized – children with higher empathy have higher status among peers, exhibit more prosocial behavior and use more constructive strategies for coping with conflicts. Empathy is outlined as the result of the interaction between genetic, neurological and social factors, with a key function in the development of interpersonal competence and sensitivity. The need for targeted support for empathy through the family environment, educational practices and social activities is emphasized as a basis for positive relationships and psychological well-being.

6. **Angelova, D. and Dobreva, A. 2024.** *Research on friendship and emotional attachment to peers in adolescence. In Proceedings: Interdisciplinary scientific conference “40 years of the Faculty of Education – traditions and innovation,” ISBN 978-619-7768-12-1, Plovdiv University Publishing House, pp. 297–306.*

The report presents a pilot empirical study of friendship and emotional attachment to peers in adolescents aged 14–17, with a focus on their role in psychological well-being. The aim is to

explore aspects of friendship and attachment in adolescence, by tracing how early attachment to parents is “transferred” to relationships with peers and close friends. The theoretical framework is based on attachment theory and subsequent research, which shows that the quality of early relationships influences the ability to emotionally connect and effective social interaction during adolescence.

The Peer Attachment Questionnaire (Peer Attachment Questionnaire) was used. Attachment Questionnaire), part of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA), which assesses three dimensions: mutual trust, quality of communication, anger and alienation. The sample includes 50 adolescents (girls and boys) aged 14–17 years, and the subject of analysis is their perceptions of the positive and negative, affective and cognitive aspects of relationships with close friends. The hypothesis of a strong relationship between trust and quality communication and a correspondingly weak relationship between alienation and mutual trust is tested. The results support the assumption that when friends are perceived as a source of psychological security (high trust and good communication), adolescents have more internal resources for coping and higher positive self-esteem, while the experience of anger and alienation is associated with weaker emotional attachment.

In conclusion, it is emphasized that quality friendships in adolescence provide a context for social learning, the development of emotional and social competence, a sense of belonging, and protection from risky influences. The ability to emotionally connect and maintain trusting relationships with peers is considered one of the most valuable skills formed during this period, with long-term repercussions on personal and emotional development.

7. **Angelova, D. 2024.** *Increasing emotional and social competence through building positive relationships in early childhood.* – In collection: *Proceedings of the Union of Scientists – 20th National Conference with International Participation “Educational Technologies, Technical University – Sofia, ISSN: 1311 2864, volume 39(1). 94-99* 2024 ISSN: 1311 2864, volume 39 (1), p.94-99

The article examines how positive relationships in early childhood support the development of emotional and social competence and related well-being. The development of emotional and social competence is described as key to satisfying the need for communication, interaction and self-awareness, as well as to coping with the demands of the modern digital world. Positive and friendly relationships with peers are presented as a necessary socializing environment in which skills such as self-regulation, prosocial behavior, problem solving and adequate emotional response are formed. Emotional and social competence is operationalized through three

components – satisfaction of psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness), autonomous motivation and behavior, which together form a process of competent functioning. Five main areas are described: self-reflection, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making related to emotional intelligence and social competence. The article traces age-related features in the development of social competence - from early interactions with a parent to the formation of first friendships and the complexity of relationships at school age. It is emphasized that family and peers are crucial factors: parental practices and play patterns influence social friendliness, and friendships provide a context for the development of cooperation, fairness and emotion regulation.

Socio-Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ), aimed at students in grades 3 to 12, measures the five domains of social-emotional competence through 25 statements rated on a 6-point scale. Sample items cover self-awareness, social awareness, self-regulation, relationship management, and responsible decision-making, and the instrument is age-sensitive and adapted for educational settings.

In conclusion, the conclusions are that successful inclusion in friendship groups builds a positive self-image, stable self-esteem and interpersonal sensitivity in the early stages of child development. Positive relationships and friendships provide a unique environment for learning and strengthening skills such as effective communication, self-regulation, respecting rules and boundaries, constructive conflict resolution and confident, respectful behavior.

**8. Angelova, D. 2024.** *Communication and friendly relations in a virtual environment. In annual scientific and methodological journal: XV Scientific and Practical Educational Forum "Innovations in Education and Cognitive Development," Burgas, vol. 15/2024, ISSUE 2. ISSN 1314-1791 (PRINT), ISSN 2535-1214 (ONLINE), pp. 46-49*

The presented report analyzes communication and friendships in a virtual environment, with a special focus on childhood and adolescence and the impact of online contacts on mental well-being. The importance of stable, positive friendships for self-esteem, emotional regulation, empathy and protective function against anxiety, loneliness, depressive symptoms and victimization is emphasized. Against this background, it examines how social networks and online communication are changing the way we connect – virtual friendships are more frequent and global, but often more superficial due to a lack of sufficient emotional connection and trust. Sullivan's interpersonal theory, attachment theory, and social identity theory are used to explain the need for belonging, the importance of early attachment, and the role of social groups in personality development. Positive peer relationships are presented as a normative need and a

key socializing and protective factor. Risks associated with excessive use of social networks are discussed: behavioral addiction, displacement of real-life contacts, negative impact on learning, family relationships, hobbies, and sports, as well as on perceptions of body image, especially in adolescents. Mechanisms such as social comparison, internalization of an “ideal” appearance, self-objectification, and online approval seeking are indicated, which increase the risk of low self-esteem and depressive symptoms.

Despite the dominant negative effects, positive influences are also described – for some adolescents, the virtual environment has a compensatory function, reducing anxiety and facilitating a sense of closeness with existing friends, especially for socially anxious youth. The effects are more -likely to be positive when online communication is mainly with real, familiar friends rather than strangers, and when digital technologies complement rather than replace face-to-face contacts.

The general highlights indicate that virtual space offers quick and easy communication, but cannot completely replace full-fledged face-to-face friendships, which are key to developing empathy, interpersonal sensitivity, and deep emotional connection. A balanced approach is needed that minimizes the risks of addiction and negative body self-perception and uses the potential of online communication as a resource for support and inclusion.

**9. Angelova, D. and Angelova, V. 2024. Professional ethics, principles and standards in the practice of the psychologist and social worker in the system of preschool and school education. In collection: “Pedagogical education – traditions and modernity,” ISSN 2534-9317 for the International scientific conference “Pedagogical education – traditions and modernity.” VTU “St. St. Cyril and Methodius,” pp. 162-168**

The report examines the need for a clear professional and ethical framework for the work of the psychologist and social worker in the system of preschool and school education. The need for a unified normative regulation of ethical principles is argued, since the legislation focuses mainly on professional training, and everyday practice raises complex questions of confidentiality, trust, boundaries and responsibility. It is emphasized that the school environment concentrates on numerous social problems (violence, neglect, poverty, illiteracy), which makes the role of the psychologist and social worker key to supporting children, teachers and families.

General and additional support for personal development and the place of the psychologist, pedagogical advisor and social worker in the support team are described. The areas of psychological assessment (health, emotional-social, cognitive, language development, family

relationships) and standardized instruments used (e.g. DP -3, WISCIV, Conners 3, CARS2) are presented in detail, as well as the functions of social work as a complement and mediator towards the family, school and social services.

The report is based on the Code of Ethics of the Bulgarian Psychological Society and outlines basic principles: respect for the dignity and rights of the individual, confidentiality, informed and voluntary consent, respect for individual differences, avoidance of discrimination and harm, limits of competence, continuing professional development, integrity and resolution of ethical dilemmas. It also focuses on personal ethics – the need for self-reflection, awareness of one's own limitations, avoidance of over-care, underestimation or rejection of the client, dependencies and dual relationships.

The principles of the International Federation of Social Work and the Bulgarian Code of Ethics for Social Service Providers are presented, which set standards for professional conduct, client protection and public interest. In conclusion, it is pointed out that in a school context, ethics is related not only to normative documents, but also to value orientation, humanistic attitude, ability for inter-institutional interaction and sustainable maintenance of the quality of assistance to children and adolescents.

**10. Maneva, G., Angelova, D. 2024. *Socio-pedagogical consulting for the purpose of developing positive relationships among children. In collection: "Social work in the changing world – education, research, policies and practices," Sofia: Bulgarian Association for Social Work Education, ISBN 978-619-92882-1-4***

The publication presents social - pedagogical counseling as an important approach for developing and strengthening positive relationships and social skills among children. Positive, trusting relationships between children and adolescents are seen as a predictor of well-being, satisfaction, and a rich repertoire of social skills, including communication, emotional closeness, and empathy. The social environment and peers, along with family and school, are described as key socializing factors that influence emotional and cognitive development.

Social -pedagogical counseling is defined as an independent form of socio-pedagogical work, including psychological, pedagogical and sometimes psychiatric techniques for conscious change in behavior and social functioning. It is a two-way interaction process that combines information, guidance, learning and support and increases the level of conscious functioning and social competence of the child. It is emphasized that the most -effective for overcoming difficulties and developing resources is the partnership position and the use of feedback, role-playing situations and social skills training.

The article focuses on the formation of skills for trust, empathy and sympathy in children with behavioral difficulties, as a key task of counseling. In conclusion, the main conclusion is that social -pedagogical counseling is a key tool for developing and strengthening positive relationships and social skills among children.

**11. Angelova, D. 2024.** *Development of a positive environment for young talents in sports. In collection: "Pedagogical education – traditions and modernity," XI international scientific conference Veliko Tarnovo. 2024. ISSN 2534-9317. VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius," pp. 509-512*

The report offers a theoretical overview of the factors that support the development of young sports talent, with an emphasis on a positive socio-psychological environment and the role of coach-athlete relationships. Sport is seen as a unique context for the formation of responsibility, self-confidence, autonomy, discipline, concern for others, team thinking and a sense of belonging, emphasizing the importance of supportive relationships with coaches, parents and peers for the well-being and motivation of adolescents. The key contribution of the coach is analyzed – not only as a technical expert, but also as a leader who, through mental training, constructive feedback and effective communication, influences the self-regulation, confidence and emotional resilience of athletes, including in partnership with a sports psychologist. Talent is also presented Development Environment Questionnaire (Martindale and al., 2010), which outlines the main dimensions of a favorable environment for talent development (long-term focus, quality preparation, communication, understanding the athlete, support network, challenging and supportive environment) and is proposed as a formative tool for evaluating and improving practices in youth sport.

**12. Angelova, D. 2025.** *Friendly relations – a factor for positive development and well-being. Report on the Twelfth International Scientific Conference "Pedagogical Education – Traditions and Modernity," November 2025 (in press)*

The presented publication analyzes friendships as a central psychological and social resource that supports positive development and well-being in childhood and adolescence and fits them into the contemporary frameworks of positive psychology and attachment theory. Friendship is viewed as a specific type of close, reciprocal relationship, characterized by emotional support, trust, loyalty, and mutual assistance that go beyond ordinary peer contacts. The theoretical analysis connects friendships with concepts such as positive functioning, psychological well-being, and protective factors in development, emphasizing that the quality of the relationship is

more important than the quantity of social contacts.

The report outlines key functions of friendship. Empirical evidence is systematized, according to which high quality friendships are associated with higher self-esteem, better emotional regulation, lower levels of anxiety, depression and loneliness, and better school adaptation. Friendships act as a buffer against stressful events and risk factors (family tension, school bullying, transitions between educational levels), providing support, coping models and validation of experiences.

Emphasis is placed on the distinction between positive and negative characteristics of friendships – support, closeness, security and constructive conflict resolution versus jealousy, dominance, hostility and exclusion. The thesis is supported by precisely the balance in which positive characteristics dominate over negative ones that predicts a higher level of peer acceptance and more sustainable psychological well-being, while conflictual and asymmetrical friendships can have a risky effect. The report traces how the understanding of friendship transforms by age: from an orientation towards shared activities and physical proximity (childhood) to trust, intimacy, loyalty and deep emotional commitment (adolescence). Possible gender differences are also noted – for example, a higher emphasis on emotional closeness and sharing in friendships in girls, compared to a greater orientation towards joint activities and group interactions in boys.

**13. Angelova, D. 2025.** *Development of a positive educational environment. Report for the twelfth international scientific conference “Pedagogical education – traditionns and modernity,” November 2025 (under print)*

The report presents theoretical models, empirical evidence and good practices for building a positive educational environment that supports the mental well-being, social integration and academic achievements of children and students. The growing number of children with mental and health difficulties, as well as the need to prevent violence and early school leaving require a comprehensive approach to school policy that integrates well-being with educational goals. It is emphasized that educational institutions have a critical role in psychosocial development, and effective cooperation between school, family and social organizations is the basis for a positive and stimulating environment.

Ryff’s model of psychological well-being is presented, including six main components: positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental management, personal growth, goal setting and self-acceptance. The model serves as a framework for positive education, which focuses not only on academic knowledge, but also on the development of character strengths, socio-

emotional abilities, family integration and extracurricular activities, as well as reflection on “well-being life.” The report focuses on the Konu & Rimpelä model, based on Allardt's sociological theory of well-being, which outlines some key categories.

School satisfaction is seen as an indicator of a psychologically healthy environment, characterized by support, security, social engagement, choice, respect, and fair conflict management. High school satisfaction is associated with better adjustment, self-esteem, motivation, and reduced risk-taking behavior, which emphasizes the importance of student engagement in decision-making and student self-governance.

The CASEL framework is presented, encompassing five fundamental competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. SEL is a process through which students and adults acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes for healthy identity, emotional regulation, empathy, building supportive relationships, and ethical decision-making. The report also notes some good practices that integrate the positive education model with a focus on a positive atmosphere, learning satisfaction, personal strengths, and active participation of students, teachers, and parents.

In conclusion - positive educational environment should build on academic development and be seen as a context for life, the development of social skills, emotional competence and friendships. Building a positive school culture is a long-term process, requiring the commitment of all parties and the pursuit of an optimally conducive environment for the development of children and students.

**14. Angelova, D., 2025.** *The role of school psychologists in the implementation of the positive education approach. In collection: Creativity and science in action: multidisciplinary research and education for the future, ISBN 978-619-7768-45-9, Plovdiv: Paisii Hilendarski Institute, pp. 231-242*

The report examines the role of the school psychologist as a key internal resource for the sustainable implementation of the positive education approach aimed at improving the mental health, well-being and academic achievement of students.

Positive education is defined as an approach that integrates academic learning with strengths, well-being, and social-emotional skills. The school psychologist is presented as a figure who coordinates the interaction between school, family, and institutions and can be a leader in the implementation of positive programs and interventions at the school community level.

The article summarizes several basic models for positive education. The main functions and activities of the school psychologist are described: prevention, diagnosis, counseling, needs

assessment, interventions for academic, behavioral and emotional difficulties, work on the prevention of aggression and mediation between the child, family, school and other institutions. Models are also indicated that emphasize the early identification of educational and social difficulties, the formation of a positive attitude towards school and the construction of a balanced lifestyle.

Data are systematized according to which positive psychological and cognitive -behavioral interventions (gratitude exercises, development of strengths, coaching, reflection) lead to a reduction in stress and depressive symptoms, an increase in self-esteem, motivation and academic success. It is emphasized that interventions are most effective when integrated into systemic programs supported by the school psychologist and not implemented as isolated single activities. Australian and American models are examined, in which positive education is developed through national strategies, professional standards, a strong research base and community support, including initiatives to integrate positive approaches into school counseling. In conclusion, it is emphasized that positive education significantly enriches the practice of school psychologists by providing scientifically based frameworks and tools for promoting the well-being, motivation and resilience of students. The school psychologist, in his role as consultant, mediator and initiator of programs, is a central figure in building a supportive, trusting and engaging school environment in which every student could develop positive qualities and resilience.

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