

Interconnected cooperation as a necessity in psycho social interventions for asylum seekers

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The Refugee

- ▶ **A refugee is a person who is forced to flee his country of origin because of political, national, religious persecution, war or general violence, who cannot return to his home country and is forced to cross national borders to seek security in neighboring countries. He/she is entitled to international protection in the country of refuge and asylum.**

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees

- ▶ **UNHCR in cooperation with state authorities, NGOs and other bodies and organizations are responsible for ensuring, protecting refugees. It provides assistance in the areas of housing, health, education, employment and legal aid to asylum seekers, giving priority to unaccompanied children, the disabled, women and the elderly.**

Refugee Family Life Transitions

- ▶ **Refugee families (nuclear, extended, single parent families) are faced with experiences that include numerous sudden changes in their daily lives, violence, transition, losses, mourning, and especially for unaccompanied children or adolescents, or by mass arrival in a country.**

The Refugee as a Traumatic Event

- ▶ Refugee life is a traumatic event for the family, and is one of the critical situations that its members are called upon to manage. Moving to another country is not a short process.
- ▶ Whether or not the trip is planned it is very dangerous with lack of food, water, changing places, forced labor, violence / abuse, loss of parents or relatives, injuries such as exposure to extreme risks while traveling to the new country often with inadequate reception, adaptation conditions and integration.

The Psychological Trauma

- ▶ **Trauma refers to a situation where a person experiences a multitude of adverse effects stemming from high-intensity stressful events such as natural or man-made disasters, wars, witnesses to violent deaths, and the person himself being subjected to torture, terrorist attack or another, crime) which cannot be processed mentally.**
- ▶ **Indicative effects: Isolation of the individual, Fear, Mood disorders with predominant depression and withdrawal disorders, Post-traumatic stress disorder.**

Interconnected Cooperation

- ▶ **The purpose of the presentation is to illustrate, through the example of one case, the issues of cooperation between mental health professionals from different disciplines and specialties.**
- ▶ **In addition, the need for stable cooperation between the mental health services that support the psychosocial refugee population in Greece should be highlighted.**

Interconnected Cooperation - The case of A.

- ▶ **A. mother of two minor children (8 & 5 years old) Syrian of Kurdish origin came to our service after a referral was made by the social scientist of the cooperating NGO.**
- ▶ **Her 8-year-old son was in a critical condition (ICU) with C-grade burns on 40% of his body.**
- ▶ **His life was in danger from hospital infections. Amputation of part of the upper limbs had been suggested while she had burns on her face.**
- ▶ **The mother's request was to provide her with mourning support for the development of her child's health.**

Difficulties of Family Members

- ▶ **Maternal health problem:** (epileptic seizures), mental disorders: anxiety disorder, PTSD, loss / transient mourning.
- ▶ **Practical, social / cultural difficulties:** single-parent family, lack of social support network, language, cultural differences.
- ▶ **Daughter's emotional difficulties:** managing events (insecurity, phobias).
- ▶ **Physical & Emotional Difficulties of son emerald:** (Mourning / Body Image Management due to Amputation)

Interconnected Cooperation for the case of A.

- ▶ **Social care**, housing, interpretation of the NGO program hosted by the family
- ▶ **Psychological support for the mother** (ADDMA Psychologist)
- ▶ **Psychiatric support for the mother** (ADDMA psychiatrist)
- ▶ **Psychological Support for the daughter** (partner refugee agency)
- ▶ **Psychological support for the son-in-law** (proposal for hospital support but subsequently provided with external support for refugees).

Elements of intervention in the case of A.

- ▶ **A solid framework has been created** among scientists from different institutions to provide support to the various issues facing the mother and her children.
- ▶ **A relationship of stability and trust** between the psychologist and A. was developed.
- ▶ **She provided psychological support and empowerment to A.** in order to manage both her loss of life and her better response to the demands of her parental role.
- ▶ **The effort to adapt to social reality** and the belief that she could make it through life based on her own strengths, without the direct support of her husband living in Germany, was reinforced.

Schematic representation of Interconnected Cooperation in the case of A.



Conclusions

- ▶ **Interconnected cooperation forms the basis and enhances:**
- ▶ **At the first level, psychosocial support - assistance** interventions that shape the conditions for the development of a climate of trust, which will build an appropriate relationship between professionals and served refugees, based on respect and acceptance.
- ▶ **At a second level, the existence of stable partnerships between scientists,** stakeholders and organizations significantly strengthens the sense of security for executives themselves who are called upon to provide services to refugees.

Suggestions

- ▶ **Promote - Strengthen the interconnected cooperation between programs, bodies and organizations.**
- ▶ **Providing specialized training in crisis management and refugee support (intercultural counseling, abuse, mourning, mental disorders, etc.).**
- ▶ **Development of specialized interdisciplinary evaluation tools.**
- ▶ **Strengthen frontline staff with supervision and psychological support to prevent burnout.**