



Reimagining Mental Health Services

Developing a new framework for mental health and psychosocial support for forcibly displaced populations in the U.S.

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RATIONALE

Refugees, asylum seekers and other forcibly displaced populations are at high risk for common mental disorders and psychosocial problems due to violence and trauma experienced in the country of origin, during migration and compounded by displacement stressors. While there are existing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) best practices and approaches developed to date, and new investments in mental health services for newly arriving populations, there is a need to develop an overall vision and conceptual framework for delivery of mental health and psychosocial support for forcibly displaced populations in the United States.

OVERVIEW

In response to this need, the Center for Adjustment, Resilience and Recovery (CARRE) at the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) are leading a project to develop a MHPSS framework for forcibly displaced populations in the U.S. (CARRE is a Category II National Child Traumatic Stress Network Center with funding from the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration). To develop the framework, the project reviews the available literature and uses human-centered design methods to engage partners and iteratively develop a framework that reflects the needs of persons with lived experience of forced displacement. The resulting framework is intended to build consensus and provide guidance to service providers, researchers and policymakers regarding how to plan for and respond to the MHPSS needs of forcibly displaced populations.

ADVISORY TEAM

A centerpiece of our approach is the creation of an advisory team, consisting of individuals with lived experience of forced displacement and service delivery, clinical, research and policy expertise specific to forcibly displaced populations. The advisory team will work closely with the IRC-UIC team to provide consultation, review and refine the framework and develop a plan for dissemination and implementation of the framework.

OBJECTIVES

1. To review relevant MHPSS frameworks and existing literature to identify practice principles, service components and workforce requirements that could be applied to a MHPSS framework for forcibly displaced populations in the U.S.
2. To consult with MHPSS service providers and advisory group members to characterize the needs, opportunities, MHPSS services and outcomes specific to forcibly displaced populations in the U.S.
3. To develop a framework for mental health and psychosocial support service delivery for refugees, asylum seekers and other forcibly displaced populations.
4. To disseminate the framework to promote implementation in service settings for children, families and individuals who have experienced forced displacement.

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