



APA ANNUAL CONVENTION
August 3-6, 2017 | Washington, D.C.

Syrian Refugee Trauma Work in Jordan, Lebanon and Germany



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Presented by
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Abstract

The 4,800,000+ Syrian refugees have resulted in an international crises of need for the refugees and their host countries. This workshop will share lessons learned in the area of trauma trainings in three countries, including basic difficulties to be aware of and to help prevent in international trauma work with refugees. Jordan presently consists of a population of 25% refugees from the Palestinians to the current Syrians.

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The Syrian camps were often seen as too dangerous to do trauma work, and led to working with Syrian families that had integrated into the Jordanian population. The Jordanian leaders/counselors benefited from basic training in the cultural differences between the Jordanian and Syrian persons that they served. The Lebanon trainings involved Syrian leaders given permission by President Assad to come from Damascus to train to help their fellow Syrians.

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The multitude of fighting factions inside of Syria had made the issue of trust very difficult with the Syrians both in the trainings and within their country. Many of the leaders being internally displaced persons were also survivors of trauma. Young men in the trainings were afraid that they would be compelled to join the Assad Army as they returned to Syria after the training. Germany has had many refugees since the fall of the Berlin Wall, housing many refugees from the former Soviet Block.

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The influx of Syrian refugees has led to political divisions within the country, escalated by hundreds of physical/sexual attacks on German women during the New Years Celebrations of 2016. The German leaders/counselors requested trainings in trauma, cross-cultural considerations and the need for safety when working within the refugee camps/facilities.

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Lebanon

- The Lebanon trainings involved 63 Syrian leaders (with 8 children) given permission by President Assad to come from Damascus to train to help their fellow Syrians.
- Most of the leaders were themselves traumatized and internally displaced persons within their country.
 - Kidnapping and murder of families
 - No electricity, food or water
 - Child age 8 witnessing severed head
 - Child's picture of house with bombs coming, "explode and we will all die.
 - Young men compelled into army.

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Lebanon

- The level of mistrust interfered with the practice sessions and should be considered in such situations.
- So many factions: Assad, Isis, rebels, rebels, rebels . . .

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Jordan

- Jordan presently consists of a population of 25% refugees from the Palestinians to the current Syrians.
- Jordan believing all refugees were the same
- Refugees leaving former wealth to the poor refugee camps and homes.

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Jordan

- 100+ Jordan leaders needed to learn the variances of behavior for Syrians:
 - Take off shoes before entering homes.
 - Drink coffee or food to show respect.
 - Bring gifts of food when having introductions.
- Practice the trauma counseling with supervision.

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East Germany

- Germany has had many refugees since the fall of the Berlin Wall, housing many refugees from the former Soviet Block.
- The influx of Syrian refugees has led to political divisions within the country, escalated by hundreds of physical/sexual attacks on German women during the New Years Celebrations of 2016.
- Need to study the culture of refugees.

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East Germany

변기에 앉아서 사용해 주세요.
Please do not step on the toilet seat.
请坐在马桶上使用, 不要踩在马桶上面! 谢谢合作!
便器に座掛けて使用してください。

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East Germany

- Need to study the culture of refugees.
- Toilets
- Expectations of refugees, i.e. students and college.

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East Germany

- The 50+ German leaders/counselors requested trainings in trauma, cross-cultural considerations and the need for safety when working within the refugee camps/facilities.
- Trainings were done in the area of drug and alcohol addiction, why?
- Trainings were done in how to detect possible dangers to themselves and others.

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CONCLUSIONS:

- Study the culture of the refugee population that you want to work with.
- Study the culture of the country/setting that the refugee population resides in.
- Consider that the country/setting will affect how the refugee will acculturate and/or interact with trauma counseling.
- Maintain professional acuity (sharpness or keenness of thought) in your trauma work.

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