

Improving Mental Health Support for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

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Tuesday 12th October 2021

Virtual Conference



Chair and Speakers Include:

Renae Mann

Executive Director of Services
The Refugee Council

Gulwali Passarlay Author *The Lightless Sky*
Activist and Consultant Passarlay Limited

Dr Piyal Sen

Medical Director and Consultant Psychiatrist
Elysium Healthcare & Network Lead Asylum
Seekers and Refugees Mental Health Network
The Royal College of Psychiatrists



Supporting Organisations:



Improving Mental Health Support for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

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*"61% of asylum seekers experience serious mental distress, refugees are five times more likely to have mental health needs than the UK population."
The Refugee Council*

*"In these uncertain and challenging times, refugees have needed therapeutic support more than ever... We've seen a major surge in demand for our support services since lockdown began in March, with many people experiencing high levels of mental distress, social isolation and destitution."
UK Refugee Council December 2020*

*"The Covid-19 pandemic has put survivors of torture and trafficking at greater risk due to the suspension of vital services providing essential care and support."
The Helen Bamber Foundation 2020*

"The world is experiencing unprecedented high rates of global migration. The reasons for this are complex and include both positive and negative factors, such as opportunity and freedom as well as poverty and violence... Refugees and asylum seekers coming to the UK by any route may have experienced significant periods of deprivation with little or no access to healthcare... Understanding your patient's journey, the risks they may have been exposed to and their narrative of any traumatic experiences can help you to diagnose any complaints they present with, screen for other conditions and make referrals for specialist care, if appropriate." BMJ 2019

"Whilst most migrants do not have mental health problems, some may be at increased risk as a result of their experiences prior to, during, or after migration to the UK. In addition to routine distress and anxiety, certain individuals, particularly those affected by emergencies, may experience elevated risk of mental disorders. This has been estimated by WHO and UNHCR in terms of projected prevalence over a 12 month period, before and after the emergency:

- 3% to 4% projected prevalence of severe disorders after the emergency (12 month prevalence), for example psychosis, severe depression, severely disabling form of anxiety disorder, compared to 2% to 3% before the emergency*
- 15% to 20% projected prevalence of mild or moderate mental disorders after the emergency, for example mild and moderate forms of depression and anxiety disorders, including mild and moderate posttraumatic stress disorder, compared to 10% before*
 - traumatic events, loss and displacement increase risk of depression and anxiety disorders, including posttraumatic stress disorder"*

Mental health: migrant health guide UK Government

This conference will focus on the highly relevant and complex area of improving Mental Health Support for Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

Attending this conference will enable you to:

- Network with colleagues who are working to improve mental health support for refugees and asylum seekers
- Reflect on the lived experience of a refugee to this country
- Understand the national context
- Understand the vulnerabilities that lead to mental health issues in refugees and asylum seekers
- Examine how to set up holistic services that meet the mental health needs of refugees and asylum seekers
- Reflect on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on refugees and asylum seekers, and how we can improve support during and beyond Covid-19
- Learn from the experiences of the Red Cross and Doctors of the World in delivering Multitiered and comprehensive MHPSS Systems & Psychological First Aid
- Improve your skills in working with asylum seekers and refugees who have experienced trauma
- Develop strategies for providing peer and community support
- Understand the role of specialist interventions such as trauma focused CBT
- Working with victims of human trafficking
- Improve practice in building resilience and improving care of unaccompanied young people seeking asylum
- Self assess and reflect on your own practice
- Gain CPD accreditation points contributing to professional development and revalidation evidence

100% of delegates at the last conference on this subject would recommend the event to a colleague

10.00 Chair's Introduction and Welcome

Rena Mann

Executive Director of Services
The Refugee Council

- setting the scene - the importance of our mental health services for asylum seekers and refugees
- about the Refugee Council – championing the rights of refugees
- current key issues in asylum seeker and refugee mental health including the impact of Covid-19

10.30 A Refugee Perspective

Gulwali Passarlay *Author The Lightless Sky Activist and Consultant* Passarlay Limited

11.00 EXTENDED SESSION: Improving support and providing access to healthcare for refugees arriving in the UK, mental health crisis support, and meeting IASC Guidelines

Dr Peter Gough

Doctors of the World UK
part of the Médecins du Monde network

- Doctors of the World UK and our approach to improving mental health support for refugees
- barriers to accessing healthcare for refugees and how we seek to overcome these
- the 'IASC Guidelines on MHPSS in Emergency Settings' pyramid in practice
- responding to the MHPSS needs of Syrian refugees arriving in the UK
- learning from our work supporting refugees in transit and applying these lessons to the UK
- the importance of supporting volunteers and carers working with refugees

11.45 Comfort Break and Virtual Networking

12.00 Building resilience and improving care of unaccompanied young people seeking asylum

Dr Ana Draper *Project Lead and Consultant Systemic Psychotherapist* Coram with

Dr Kate Benham *Senior Clinical Psychologist and Lead for Trauma-Informed Model of Care*
Solent NHS Trust

- specific emotional health and wellbeing challenges for unaccompanied young people
- UASC in the UK, the stories they tell
- an early intervention framework that enhances wellbeing and resilience

12.45 Interactive Panel Discussion with delegates – on the Themes from the Morning Session

**Led by Chair and including
Dr Gough, Dr Draper and Dr Benham**

- improving support – barriers and ways to overcome these
- improving services – what do refugees and asylum seekers need from us?
- impact on and support of volunteers and carers
- unaccompanied young people as a specific group

13.15 Lunch Break and Virtual Networking

13.45 EXTENDED SESSION: Working with asylum seekers and refugees who have experienced trauma: Mental Health Interventions

Dr Piyal Sen

Medical Director and Consultant Psychiatrist Elysium Healthcare &
Network Lead Asylum Seekers and Refugees Mental Health Network
The Royal College of Psychiatrists

- working with refugees who have experienced trauma
- moving from first aid to longer term approaches
- sharing good practice and working together to improve services

14.25 Adapting Trauma-focused Treatment for the Needs of Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Dr Angeliki Argyriou

Clinical Psychologist,
Helen Bamber Foundation

- the work of the Helen Bamber Foundation
- how can we adapt trauma focused treatment specifically for asylum seekers
- a 'phased approach' to meeting the needs of refugees/asylum seekers, which incorporates some psychosocial interventions/a focus on community intervention
- staff/volunteer wellbeing

15.15 Comfort Break and Virtual Networking

15.30 Working with victims of human trafficking

Dr Nicola Wright

Associate Professor in Mental Health,
Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences,
University of Nottingham

- what specific challenges do victims of human trafficking present?
- how do survivors describe their mental health challenges?
- what promotes mental health recovery for survivors?

16.00 Peer support and co-delivery of services as a transformative force for survivors of torture

Kolbassia Haoussou *MBE Director of Survivor Empowerment with*
Borri Jarju *Peer Support Network Co-Ordinator*
Freedom From Torture

- how survivors can be included in the delivery of services, both through co-delivery with therapists and peer support
- impact on survivors and how these service developments contribute to rehabilitation
- implications for services and how we understand our role in supporting survivors

16.30 Closing Remarks from Chair, followed by Close

There will be time after each talk for Questions and Answers

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Tuesday 12th October 2021, Virtual Conference

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Venue

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Date

Tuesday 12th October 2021

Conference Fee

- ☐ £295 + VAT (£354) for NHS, Social care, private healthcare organisations and universities.
- ☐ £250 + VAT (£300) for voluntary sector / charities.
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