



IASW and
UCD School of School of Social Policy, Social Work and
Social Justice,

‘Working with Refugees’
Webinar’

SPEAKER:

**BRIAN DAVIS, SOCIAL INCLUSION SOCIAL WORK
TEAM LEADER BALSESKIN RECEPTION CENTRE**

Reflections from Social Work Practice



- *How can social workers best respond to the needs of refugees arriving in Ireland from various contexts?*
- *What role can the social work profession play in challenging the different responses that groups of refugees have experienced?*



HSE Social Work Service Referrals

For queries/information about the HSE Social Work Service in Baleskin:

Please contact Brian Davis, Social Work Team Leader directly at
brian.davis@hse.ie



Social Work Practice

In each of these cases, the social work service endeavours to:

- provide a social work assessment,
- provide practical, emotional and counselling support where appropriate
- Help the clients form a care plan and
- Liaise with relevant support agencies and advocate where appropriate.

How can social workers best respond to the needs of refugees arriving in Ireland from various contexts?



- Armed conflicts/ Persecution can cause significant psychological and social suffering
- Pre-existing social problems
- War/Persecution-induced social problems
- Pre-existing psychological problems
- War/Persecution-induced problems



- Rates of depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be up to 15 times higher than the general population because of pre-migration stressors (Bogic et al., 2015).
- At every level, fleeing war and persecution can erode all normally protective supports and increase the risks of diverse problems and tend to amplify pre-existing problems



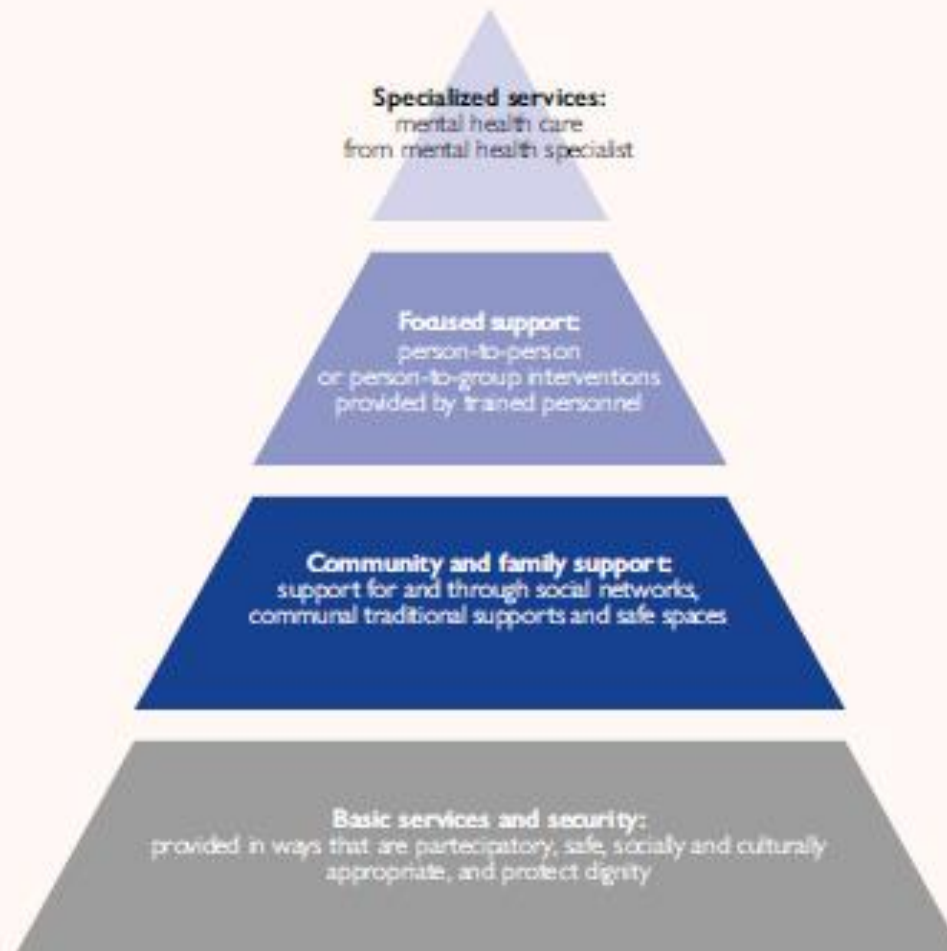
- Priority is to protect and improve people's mental health and psychosocial well-being.
- The composite term *mental health and psychosocial support* describe any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental disorder (IASC, 2007)
- Achieving this priority requires coordinated action among all government and nongovernment actors
- Social supports can be essential to protect and support mental health and psychosocial well-being in the early phase



- *How can social workers best respond to the needs of refugees arriving in Ireland from various contexts?*
- IASC Intervention Pyramid for Mental Health and Psycho-social Support
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Transcultural/Culturally Competent Social Work Practice
- Crisis Intervention, Strength's Based, Systemic and Anti Discrimination/Anti- Racist Approaches to Social Work

BOX 2 | Intervention pyramid for mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies

In situations of adversity, affected people react in different ways and have diverse needs. To guarantee appropriate support and to meet these varied needs, MH-PSS interventions should be part of a layered system of complementary support. All layers are equally important and should ideally be implemented concurrently.





- E.g. of Step 1 Interventions from SW
- Developing information booklets and welcome packs can help people to adjust and settle and access basic services and supports
- Providing ‘drop in clinic’s’ which can be an effective way of assisting people by providing a visible/accessible point of information and support and can also help form clear escalation pathways for people who were seeking help
- **Key role advocate for Basic services and security:** provided in ways that are participatory, safe, socially and culturally appropriate, and protect dignity



- E.g's Step 2
- Welcome workshops and group work can help people become aware of what is around them and of other people experiencing similar challenges. It can also have a social aspect of bringing different families and individuals together.
- Key role can also be to help co-ordinate/develop community networks with agencies/services in the local area to help the refugees feel supported and avail of local services and amenities as appropriate –



- E.g's Step 3
- Conducting comprehensive psycho-social assessment of support needs of individuals and families - and implement any support/care plans that arise out of this.
- It can provide a comprehensive case management/co-ordination for those individuals found to be most vulnerable and assist and liaise as appropriate services to try and assist their need

Psychological First Aid

- evidence based approach for those who provide early assistance
- to help reduce the initial distress in the aftermath of trauma
- Focus on non intrusive compassionate intervention to help enhance the immediate sense of safety
And physical and emotional comfort

(Psychological Society of Ireland, 2022))

Look—Listen—Link

	<p>It is important to prepare, and we recommend that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ Learn about the crisis event and⇒ Learn about available services and support
LOOK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ Look out for people with urgent basic needs. Although some needs are obvious, always ask. Find out a person's priorities – what is most important to them.⇒ Look out for people with serious distress reactions. Indicators of more severe reactions include: continuous distress without periods of relative calm or rest; and intense intrusive recollections that continue despite a return to safety.⇒ We must watchfully wait and be aware if these symptoms continue for over a month. Specialist care may be required.
LISTEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ Listen to people and help them feel calm. If you remain calm, quiet and present, speak softly and slowly, and keep your body relaxed, the distressed person may begin to relax too.⇒ Listen with undivided attention and acknowledge feelings rather than trying to draw out details. This can help people feel understood and supported.⇒ Some individuals may share experiences about their home country or about their displacement. Listen with empathy, but do not probe for more details. Try to listen without interrupting.
LINK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ Help people address the needs they have identified and find information about how they can access services.⇒ Don't overlook the needs of vulnerable or marginalised people.⇒ Displaced children and families who have positive social support systems are better able to tolerate stressors that lie ahead.⇒ Affected people may be able to help each other – create opportunities to bring them together.⇒ Identify group activities that match the individual's interests, such as, educational, recreational wellness, religious/spiritual and support groups.

Why Trans cultural perspectives in SW?



If we fail to acknowledge the influence of culture on the work we do, we limit our ability to interact with and help families and children. Even worse, culturally incompetent practice can actually hurt clients (Harper & Lantz, 1989).



- Cultural competency focuses on our ability to deliver services that meet the social, cultural, and linguistic needs of patients.(M. Schouler-Ocak et al. (2015))
- It represents the goal that all patients, especially those from minority groups, feel acknowledged and supported (M. Schouler-Ocak et al. (2015))
- HSE Intercultural Strategy talks of ‘promoting approaches that are responsive to the range of cultures and religions of service users’



This ideally all leads to

- Respectful Partnership
- Where our work across cultures is characterised by awareness of our unconscious bias and a spirit of inquiry and collaboration.
- Incorporate “cultural humility” and integrate “an attitude of learning”



- *What role can the social work profession play in challenging the different responses that groups of refugees have experienced?*



- Become increasingly self-aware of our biases, positions of power and how we may be perceived and include relevant aspects of pre-migration, trauma-related, integration and transcultural-related issues in our assessments
- Encourage services to consider how they make services as accessible and responsive as they can be to different clients and promote policies within the work place/agencies we work with regarding same
- Promote, learn from and advocate about situations/individuals with lived experiences .. E.g. Asylum Seeker led organisations like MASI
People's situations can be more powerful than statistics



- Form alliances/networks with like minded organisations and individuals – e.g. Asylum Seekers Support Network, Irish Refugee Council
- IASW Special Interest Group was very helpful in raising issues
- Take a Systemic and Anti-Discriminative , Anti Racist view and advocate when there are clear gaps/issues
- IASW Anti-Racism Advisory Group led by BME members with lived experience of Racism has been formed to work with their white allies to come up with a Anti Racist Strategy within IASW

Practical Resources



- **Irish Refugee Council Ukrainian helpline and Asylum Support Network**

<https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/ukrainian-language-information-helpline>

- <https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/the-asylum-support-network>

- **HSE website re Ukrainians**

- <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/procedures-guidelines/supporting-ukrainian-people-in-ireland/>

- Designated Representatives from HSE Social Inclusion for each CHO

- **PPS/Documentation**

- <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/faqs-for-ukraine-nationals-and-residents-of-ukraine/>

- Ukrainian Support Centre, Guild Building, Cork St, Dublin 8, D08 XH90

- **Accommodation**

- Ukrainian's being asked present at the CityWest Convention Centre, Garters Lane, Saggart, County Dublin, D24A38Y. Or email Ukraine@equality.gov.ie , IP applicants ipasinbox@equality.gov.ie



- **Trauma informed resources**

- Psychological First Aid Resource (PSI)

- [https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/source/SIGHRP%20-%20Rapid%20Response%20Psychology%20Tool%20Time%20of%20War%20Resources%20\(Final\).pdf](https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/source/SIGHRP%20-%20Rapid%20Response%20Psychology%20Tool%20Time%20of%20War%20Resources%20(Final).pdf)

- Psychological First Aid Manual (WHO)

- <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/102380>

- HSE Workshop on Working with individuals affected by Trauma

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTkirybvJIg>

- www.HSELanD.ie

- Inclusive Practices and Intercultural Awareness (30 minutes)

- Working with Others (30 minutes) will enhance your ability to provide a culturally sensitive service

- Refugees, Protection Applicants and Trauma (45 minutes)



- **Anti Racist Practice**
- <https://www.iasw.ie/events/297-setting-the-context-understanding-the-dimensions-of-racism-in-ireland>
- <https://www.iasw.ie/events/292-launch-iasw-anti-racism-strategy-2021-2023>

- **Mental Health Reform - Cultural competence resources tool kit**
- <https://www.mentalhealthreform.ie/cultural-competency/>
- Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice, NASW 2015
- National Cultural Competency Tool (NCCT) For Mental Health Services, Multicultural Mental Health Australia 2010

- **Working effectively with interpreters**
- Irish Refugee Council
- https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOvmx2GXy_bC4H7G7d6jbS4ih9lHk8_Yp

- **HSE**
- [On Speaking Terms: Good Practice Guidelines for Staff in the Provision of Interpreting Services.](#)
- [Lost in Translation? Good Practice Guidelines for HSE Staff in Planning, Managing and Assuring Quality Translations of Health Related Material into Other Languages.](#)

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