



TOOLS FOR SELF HELP FOR HEALTH WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS

IENE 6

Contemporary large migration waves into Europe: Enabling health workers to provide psychological support to migrants and refugees and develop strategies for dealing with their own emotional needs.

Intellectual Output 7

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SELF-HELP TOOLS FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AND VOLUNTEERS

Resource 1

Title: UNHCR's Mental Health and Psychological Support for Staff

Organization: The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

Year: 2013

Authors: Courtney E. Welton-Mitchell, Ph.D. Asst. Professor, Graduate School of Professional Psychology International Disaster Psychology, University of Denver

Source/Link:

<http://www.unhcr.org/51f67bdc9.pdf>

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Purpose of the Tool: This is a tool designed for evaluating mental health conditions and psychosocial support needs of humanitarian staff. It is also a tool created for raising awareness for institutional responses intended to mitigate distress and enhance resilience of humanitarian staff in response to stressors encountered during the course of providing humanitarian assistance.

Description/Brief Summary: The tool gives a detailed report of UNHCR's current mental health and psychosocial programs and policies for humanitarian staff and how these compare to recognized frameworks. Also it contains the knowledge of current mental health needs and concerns of UNHCR staff and how these are being addressed. It could be very useful for collecting the principles of self-help guides&tools from an international and professional organisation's perspective. There are recommendations for ensuring appropriate response and follow up for survivors of critical incidents, for increasing availability and utilization of formal mental health and psychosocial support and for encouraging informal social support among staff. Many useful external links of self-help tools for staff are given in the related chapters, such as:

Publicly available, free, online PFA (psychological first aid) trainings (<https://learn.nctsn.org/course/index.php?categoryid=11>)

Mobile PFA phone apps

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/pfa_mobile_app.asp)

Various free online training courses including ones on secondary stress and vicarious trauma for humanitarian workers

<http://headington-institute.org/?tabid=2258>)

Self assessment tools

<https://ecouch.anu.edu.au/welcome>)

Overall the tables of “Management response to the UNHCR’S Mental Health and Psychosocial Support of Staff (MHPSS) evaluation” is a good summary for action plans and recommendations.

Special Features (Validation, Language Options etc): This manual is available only in English.

Conclusions/Recommendations: This resource could be useful for framing the mental health and psychological support issues for the health care professionals and volunteers dealing with refugees and their wellbeing from an organisational perspective of UNHCR’s. It could give a good start to conducting and structuring the necessary actions for psychological support for staff with the summarising tables of “what to do’s” and also with the external links for PFAs, online training courses specialised for humanitarian staff and self assessment tools.

Resource 2

Title: UNHCR Emergency Handbook: Staff Wellbeing

Subtitle: Coping with Stress

Organization: The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

Year: 2015

Authors: This document forms part of the 4th edition of the UNHCR Emergency Handbook and was generated from the digital Emergency Handbook system.

Source/Link:

<https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/34516/coping-with-stress>

Purpose of the Tool: This tool is specifically created for the use of humanitarian staff when they need to cope with chronic stress.

Description/Brief Summary: The tool gives brief key points for coping with stress that could be helpful for the health care professionals, service providers and volunteers dealing with refugees.

These key points are:

- Know what you are trying to do in every situation. This helps you to remain constructive when you face problems.
- Engage in something other than work every day. This helps you to stay mentally fit.
- Call or skype home. Write a letter if telephone lines are poor or internet is too slow for Skype. This helps you to be who you are.
- Create opportunities for extended sleep (at least 6 hours). Make every effort to eat good food. Drink water rather than alcohol or sweetened soft drinks. This helps you to remain balanced.
- Do not drink excessively to unwind or relax. Practice breathing or other relaxing exercises instead.

There are given good practice recommendations, considerations for practical informations such as:

- Think regularly about things other than work: this injunction is common to all methods of building resilience.
- Avoid talking about work with your colleagues after work. Do not become your work.
- Keep in regular contact with home and friends (by skype or e-mail). They will remind you that there is a world outside your duty station.
- Find an understanding soul in your duty station and talk about what matters (emotions, meaning, life choices).
- Write your thoughts in a stream of consciousness every evening. It has been shown that this technique improves the quality of sleep and reduces the impact of cumulative stress.
- Do a mindfulness breathing exercise every morning. This is an alternative to the stream of consciousness exercise and also improves the quality of sleep. If practised in the morning, it improves attention, emotional control and mental discipline in general.
- Take physical exercise or do yoga. These activities rebalance your hormones and drain toxic metabolic agents.
- If you have hobbies, practise them: do them every day if the environment permits.
- Read literature rather than watch TV. Television rarely engages your mind as much as literature.

The tool also provides useful external links such as:

A site dedicated to the mental health of humanitarian workers:

<http://www.headington-institute.org/>

This covers a broad range of health subjects, including mental health, in a user friendly way:

<https://www.helpguide.org/>

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/helping-someone-with-ptsd.htm>

A site dedicated to raising self-awareness:

<http://www.pathwaytohappiness.com/>

A site developed by colleagues which demonstrates yoga and other stress management exercises in a typical guest-house setting:

<https://emergencyoga.com/>

Special Features (Validation, Language Options etc): This manual is available in English and French.

Conclusions/Recommendations: This resource could be helpful for learning basic coping stress methods.

Resource 3

Title: UNHCR Emergency Handbook: Staff Wellbeing

Subtitle: Dealing with Critical Incidents and Trauma (Staff)

Organization: The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

Year: 2015

Authors: This document forms part of the 4th edition of the UNHCR Emergency Handbook and was generated from the digital Emergency Handbook system.

Source/Link:

<https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/92294/dealing-with-critical-incidents-and-trauma-staff#8,1506602564232>

Purpose of the Tool: This tool is specifically created for the use of humanitarian staff if they went through a traumatic event. It provides information about recognising acute stress reaction and when to seek further psychological help.

Description/Brief Summary: The tool provides knowledge and recommendations that could be helpful for the health care professionals and volunteers dealing with refugees when they faced a critical accident, a traumatic event or if they were in a position to give a hand for a colleague who had a trauma and needed help.

The tool gives basic key points for the traumatized staff such as:

- Seek safety and support.
- Be in contact with your family and friends.
- Check symptoms (acute stress reactions).
- Contact the staff welfare section.

Good practice recommendations are given and considerations for practical information such as:

Taking care of yourself after a critical incident

- Expect the incident to bother you.
- Expect to feel guilty: be gentle with yourself.

- Remind yourself that your reactions are normal.
- Learn as much as possible about acute stress reaction.
- Get plenty of sleep and rest.
- Spend time with trusted family members, friends and colleagues. Talk with them about the event. Talk about your immediate reactions as the incident was unfolding, particularly your thoughts and feelings.
- As much as possible, try to follow your routines and eat a balanced diet.
- Practice stress management and relaxation techniques, do physical activities, play music, read.
- Attend group debriefings and informational update meetings unless these deeply disturb you.
- Minimize use of alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, other drugs, and sugar.
- Contact staff welfare or visit a mental health professional.

Taking care of others (for managers and colleagues)

- Comfort and console the distressed person.
- Protect him or her from further threats or distress. Protect him or her from the media, onlookers, insensitive colleagues, and emergency workers.
- Meet his or her immediate physical needs and provide practical help.
- Facilitate social support. Provide access to a phone, contact supportive friends and family.
- Listen actively and supportively if he or she wishes to talk about the experience. If he or she does not wish to talk, respect his or her decision.
- Offer access to information, including information about the event. (What happened? Who was affected? How seriously? Where they are now?)
- Try to ground the person. Help him or her to identify specific goals, break tasks down into manageable sub-tasks, encourage a return to routine. At the same time, advise him or her not to undertake a heavy workload, take on demanding tasks, or work long hours, because this will impede the natural healing process.
- Assist him or her to find sources of help and support. Offer access to professional counselling.

The tool also provides useful external links such as:

Relaxation Techniques for Stress Relief:

<https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/34619/Relaxation+Techniques+for+Stress+Relief/3b3ae17a-2dbf-4cc4-b2b8-569c805bd379>

Self Care during Deployment:

<https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/34619/Self+Care+during+Deployment/3ead8e45-2712-42be-b3b8-62a4ec8390df>

Stress Symptom Scale:

<https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/34619/Stress+Symptom+Scale/67ba906b-8b88-4ed9-b8ce-71eb51df170b>

Stress Management Textbook:

<https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/34619/Strtess+Management-textbook/444b08a2-2a23-48ba-a527-79fd8640092e>

Special Features (Validation, Language Options etc): This manual is available in English and French.

Conclusions/Recommendations: This resource could be helpful for health care professionals and volunteers for recognising the acute stress reactions after a traumatic event and learning how to take care of themselves and also their colleagues after a critical incident or trauma.

Resource 4

Title: Psychological First Aid: Guide for Field Workers

Organization: World Health Organization (WHO)

Year: 2011

Authors: Leslie Snider (War Trauma Foundation, WTF), Mark van Ommeren (World Health Organization, WHO) and Alison Schafer (World Vision International, WVI).

Source/Link:

http://www.who.int/mental_health/publications/guide_field_workers/en/

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Purpose of the Tool: This tool provides information about how to conduct and utilize PFA in a textbook format.

Description/Brief Summary: The tool involves a chapter called “Caring for yourself and your colleagues” (Page: 37-40) that gives basic recommendations for health care professionals and volunteers.

Special Features (Validation, Language Options etc): This manual is available in Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, English, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Japanese, Kiswahili, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sinhala, Slovenian, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, and Urdu.

Conclusions/Recommendations: This resource could be useful for the health care professionals and volunteers to give the best help to the refugees while maintaining their own psychological wellbeing.

Resource 5

Title: USAID Staff Care Program Website

Subtitles: (Selected few)

- Stress Management Tips
- The Resilience Factor in Staff Care

Organization: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Year: Unspecified

Authors: Dr. Nancy Good USAID Staff Care Center, Training and Organizational Resilience Advisor (for the text “The Resilience Factor in Staff Care”).

Material Used with permission from The KonTerra Group (for the text “Stress Management Tips”).

Source/Link:

<https://staffcare.usaid.gov/>
<http://konterragroup.net/usaaid/resources/>

Purpose of the Tool: This website presents a variety of external links to self help manuals, self assessment tools and also brief interventions/recommendations of specialised conditions for the use of humanitarian staff.

Description/Brief Summary: Selected useful external links from the website are shown below:

Stress Management Tips

<http://konterragroup.net/usaaid/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Stress-Management-Tips.pdf>

The Resilience Factor in Staff Care

<http://konterragroup.net/usaaid/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/The-Resilience-Factor-in-Staff-Care.pdf>

Stress and Coping: A Crash Course

<http://konterragroup.net/usaaid/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Stress-and-Coping-Crash-Course.pdf>

Coping with Grief and Loss

<http://konterragroup.net/usaaid/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Grief-and-Loss.pdf>

Compassion Fatigue

<http://konterragroup.net/usaaid/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Compassion-Fatigue.pdf>

Sleep Hygiene: Good Sleep Habits

<http://konterragroup.net/usaaid/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Sleep-Hygiene-Good-Sleep-Habits.pdf>

Special Features (Validation, Language Options etc): This website is available only in English.

Conclusions/Recommendations: This website has a rich list of external links which could be helpful for the health care professionals and volunteers when they need psychological support for themselves and also when they were helping refugees.

Resource 6

Title: The Road to Resilience

Organization: American Psychological Association (APA)

Year: Unspecified

Authors: Lillian Comas-Diaz, PhD, Director, Transcultural Mental Health Institute, Washington DC, Suniya S. Luthar, PhD, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, N.Y., Salvatore R. Maddi, PhD, The Hardiness Institute, Inc., University of California at Irvine, Newport Beach, Calif., H. Katherine (Kit) O'Neill, PhD, North Dakota State University and Knowlton, O'Neill and Associates, Fargo, N.D., Karen W. Saakvitne, PhD, Traumatic Stress Institute/Center for Adult & Adolescent Psychotherapy, South Windsor, Conn., Richard Glenn Tedeschi, PhD, Department of Psychology, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Source/Link:

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>

<http://konterragroup.net/usaaid/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/The-Road-to-Resilience-RC.pdf>

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Purpose of the Tool: This tool contains information within describes resilience and some factors that affect how people deal with hardship. Much of this brochure focuses on developing and using a personal strategy for enhancing resilience.

Description/Brief Summary: The tool introduces what resilience is and which factors contributes to resilience. The strategies for building resilience and other recommendations are also described briefly in this tool.

“10 ways to build resilience”

- Make connections
- Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems
- Accept that change is a part of living
- Move toward your goals
- Take decisive actions
- Look for opportunities for self-discovery
- Nurture a positive view of yourself
- Keep things in perspective
- Maintain a hopeful Outlook

- Take care of yourself
- Additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful

Special Features (Validation, Language Options etc): This manual is available in English and Spanish.

Conclusions/Recommendations: This resource could be helpful for the health care professionals and volunteers dealing with refugees to learn about the concept of “resilience” and how to enhance it.