

# Belonging: The Heart of Refugee Mental Health

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“Social Work Leaders: Lets Come Together”

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Amber E Gray

[www.ambergray.com](http://www.ambergray.com)

[restorativeresources@gmail.com](mailto:restorativeresources@gmail.com)

505-603-7021

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THANK YOU

# Who is a Refugee?

- Long history of human migration
- Multiple definitions-all include forced displacement, fear and loss
- Immigrants leave their homes voluntarily—usually seeking financial opportunities
- Refugees are designated as such before arriving in their host country
- Asylum seekers declare themselves as refugees once they arrive in the new country
  - Still refugees, but not legally, yet.
- IDP's are persons forced from their home for political, religious and other reasons but who remain within the borders of their own country.

# A refugee... An asylum seeker...

is a person who “owing to a **well-founded fear of being persecuted** for reasons of **race, religion, nationality**, membership in a particular **social group**, or **political opinion**, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”

Source: *Protecting Refugees: Question and Answers*, published by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) Public Information Section.

# Refugee Numbers

- o 1992 : 17 million refugees (Keen)
- o In 2002 : 24 million (UNHCR)
- o In 2004: 9.5 Million (19.5 million including IDP' s) (UNHCR)
- o In 2005: 8.4 Million (20.8 million including IDP' S) (UNHCR)
- o In 2008: 11.4 Million; 26 Million including IDP' s (AsiaNews)
- o In 2010: 42 Million ( 16 Million refugees, 26 Million IDP' s (UNHCR)
- o In 2012: 45.2 Million (28.8 refugees) (UNHCR)
- o 2014: 60 Million, world record: 1 in every 122 humans is either an IDP, a refugee, or an asylum seeker

# The reality today

## 68.5 Million People are Displaced

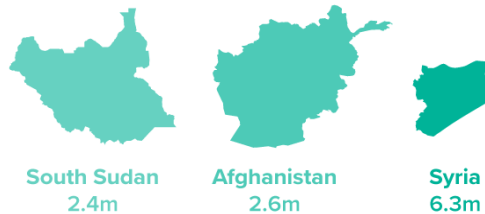


Where the world's displaced people are being hosted

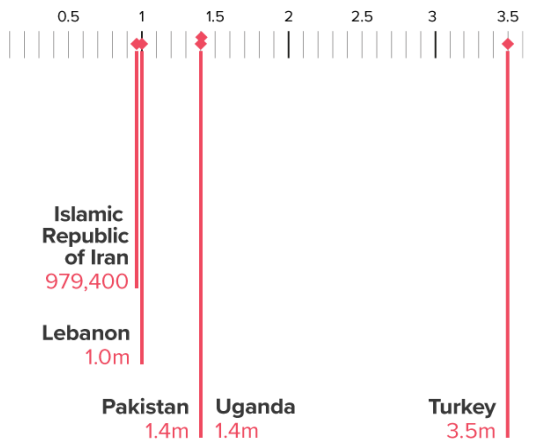


85 per cent of the world's displaced people are in developing countries

**57%** of refugees worldwide came from three countries



Top refugee-hosting countries



**10 million** stateless people 

**102,800** Refugees resettled

**44,400** people a day forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution

# Refugee Statistics

- Annual numbers determined by US government
- Vary between 50,000-80,000
- 2002 –70,00 authorized; 28,000 resettled
- 2003 = estimated 70,000; actual=39,201 (Afghanistan, Cuba, Liberia, Iran)
- 2005 = 53,738 (Cuba, Afghanistan, Liberia, Laos, Burma)
- 2006 = 41,053 (Former USSR, Vietnam, Burma, Liberia)
- 2007 = 48, 281 (Iraqi's, DRC, Burundi)
- 2008 = 59,000 (Iraqi's)

# Refugee Statistics

- Annual numbers determined by US government
- Vary between 50,000-80,000
- 2009 Ceiling = 80,000; arrivals = 74,654 (Iraq, Burma)
- 2010 = 73,311 (Bhutan, Burma, Iran, Iraq)
- 2011 = Ceiling = 80,000; 56,419 (Bhutan, Burma, Iran, Iraq)
- 2014 = 69,987 (Burma, Iraq, Bhutan, Somalia)
- 2015 = Ceiling = 80,000; arrivals = 69,933 (Syria, DRC, Iraq, Somalia, Myanmar)
- 2016 = Ceiling = 85,000; arrivals = 84,995 (DRC, Syria, Myanmar, Iraq, Somalia, Bhutan, Iran, Afghanistan, Ukraine)

2017

Ceiling = 110,000  
Reduced to 50,000

- Removed google image of refugees



# 2017

## Total = 36,036

- DRC = 6365
- Syria = 5467
- Iraq = 5331
- Somalia = 4444
- Burma = 2787
- Ukraine = 2353
- Bhutan = 2074
- Iran = 1804
- Afghanistan = 959
- Eritrea = 832
- El Salvador = 576
- Ethiopia = 541
- Sudan = 528
- CAR = 238
- Russia = 226

# 2018

## Cap = 30,000

- Removed google image of refugees

# NPR March 5, 2019

- Migrant Families Arrive in Busloads as Border Crossings Hit 10 Year High
- Between October, 2018 and the last week of February, 2019, 260,000 + people have been picked up - a 90% increase over the same period a year ago.

# Current Reality

The UN refugee agency reported on World Refugee Day that the number of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people worldwide has, for the first time in the post-World War II era, exceeded 50 million people. APPROXIMATELY 80% are in developing countries and half are children.

--UNHCR's annual Global Trends; News Stories, 20 June 2015

1 in 122 people worldwide is either a refugee, asylum seeker, or internally displaced person. If this population were a country, it would be the world's 24<sup>th</sup> largest.

--Time Special Report, October 19, 2015

- Previous estimates were that 5-35% of refugees in the US have been tortured
- A recent meta-analysis by CVT (2015) suggests that up to 44% of refugees in the US have been tortured
- This changes the probable number of survivors in the US from 400,000-500,000, to 1.3 million
- 40-50% of these survivors suffer from PTSD and Major Depressive Disorder
- <http://www.cvt.org/news-events/press-releases/us-home-far-more-refugee-torture-survivors-previously-believed>

# What is the admission procedure like?

- Started formally in 1980 with the Refugee Act of 1980.
- Legal basis of Refugee Admission Program set by UN criteria.
- Refugee Admission Program run by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) of the US Dept. of State. In conjunction with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- Every year the president and congress determine the number of refugees to be admitted.
- UNHCR refers individuals based on this quota.
- Refugees receive legal permission to resettle in the United States before they arrive.
- In NM, Lutheran Family Services helps resettling families to their new communities.

# Who are Refugees?

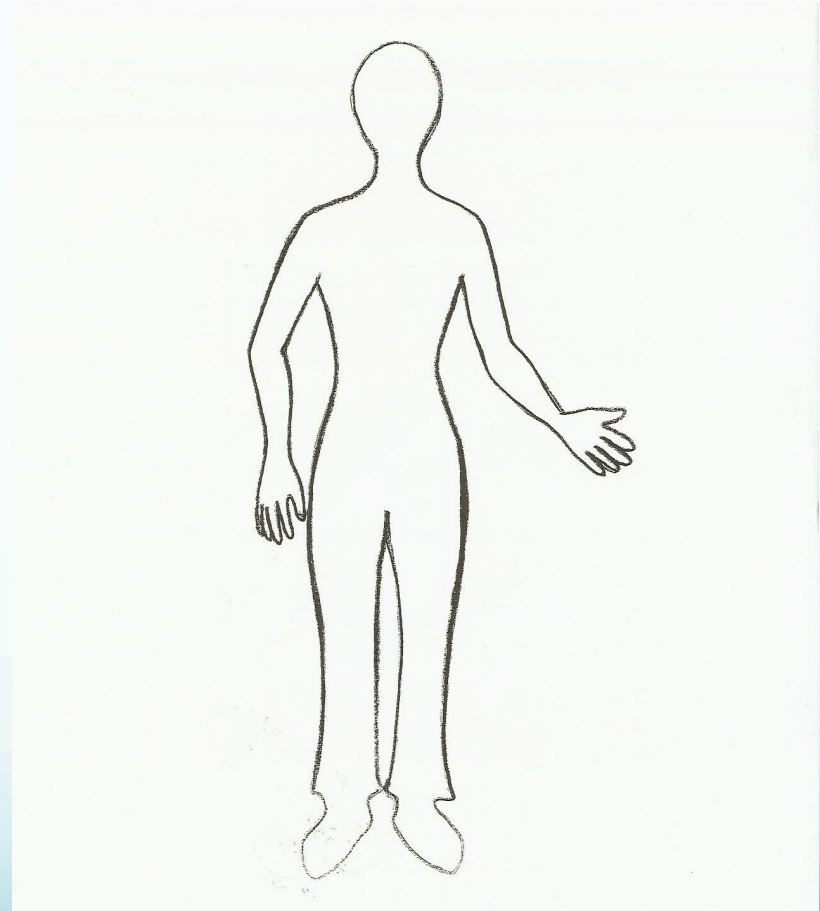
- “Every person is in some respects like every other person, like some other people, and like no-one else.”

Andrea Northwood, CVT

- Who are Refugees: Vulnerable or Courageous? Traumatized or Resilient?
  - “All they need to do is work.”
  - “Poor, poor refugees; they are all traumatized.”
  - “They can just get mental health services where everyone else does”

# What do we *really* mean by mental health?

- Mental Health
- Mental Wellness
- Wellness
- Well-being



# Global Discourse

- Evidenced-based Practice
- Individual Mental Health
- Western and Northern Biases: The Clinical Process = “Real” Mental Health in egocentric cultures
- Practice-based Evidence
- Collective, socio-cultural processes: Story-telling, rituals, rites of passage, ceremony
- Indigenous and Community-based approaches/bio-psycho-social processes = sociocentric self identity

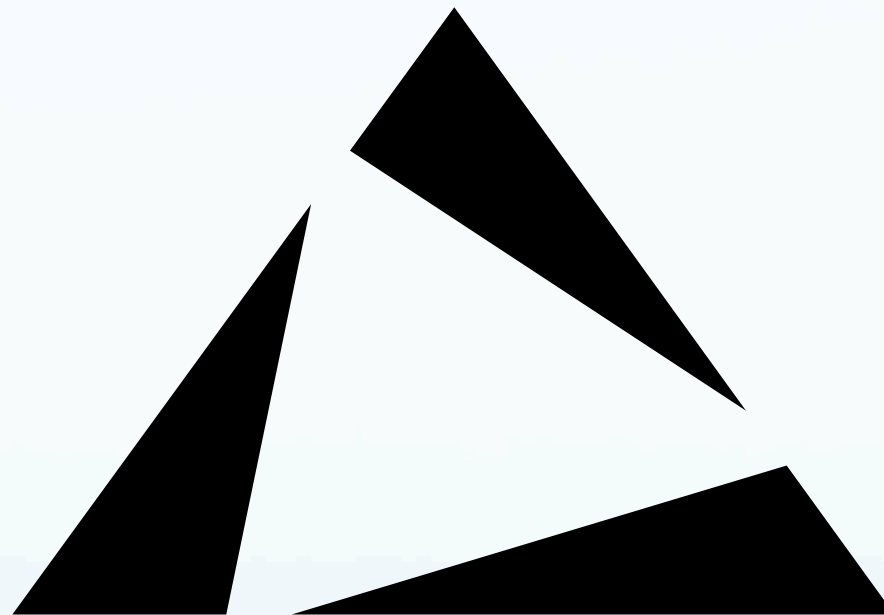


# The Evidenced Based CBT Triangle

**THOUGHTS**

Feelings

Behaviors



# Human Behavior, Human Being: Adjusting the Framework for Culture, Context and The Body

## **Belonging, Meaning-Making**



BODY: Biology, sensori-motoric  
Information, the basis of  
thoughts, emotions,  
and behaviors/action

# GROUNDING to EARTH

Having one's feet solidly planted on the ground or being fully in contact with the ground. It does not describe a mechanical process but an energetic one. To be grounded a person must feel his feet touching the ground.

Wilhelm Reich

- Cottingham, J., Porges, S., & T. Lyon (March, 1988). Effects of soft tissue mobilization (rolfing pelvic lift) on parasympathetic tone in two age groups. *Physical Therapy*, 68 (3), 352-356.
- Cottingham, J., Porges, S. & K. Richmond (September 1988). Shifts in pelvic inclination angle and parasympathetic tone produced by rolfing soft tissue manipulation. *Physical Therapy*, 68 (9), 1364-1370

True navigation begins in the human heart. It's the most important map of all.

- Removed google image of heart

• © Amber Gray, 2005

*Courage*

*Vulnerability*

Elizabeth Kapu'uwailani Lindsey

# Courage: cour·age is Heart-centered

- 'kəriʃ/
- noun: **courage**
- the ability to do something that frightens one. “She called on all her courage to face the ordeal”
- strength in the face of pain or grief. “He fought his illness with great courage”
- *synonyms:*  
bravery, courageousness, pluck, pluckiness, valor, fearlessness, intrepidity, nerve, daring, audacity, boldness, grit, true grit, hardihood, heroism, gallantry; More informal : guts, spunk, moxie, cojones, balls  
"the courage of firefighters is just awesome"

Origin: Middle English (denoting the heart, as the seat of feelings): from Old French *corage*, from Latin *cor* ‘heart.’

# The Heart as Core to Belonging, Compassion, Resilience, Well-being, Healing and Humanity

- Removed google images of vagus nerve and 3 brains (gut, heart, brain)

## The 3 Brains

The Nervous System

# Compassion: Promoting Well-being for All

SYMPATHY	. <i>“I recognize your pain because I have known my own.”</i>
EMPATHY	<i>“ I feel sorry for you.”</i>
COMPASSION	. <i>“I feel your pain.”</i>

©Amber E Gray, 2010  
Neuroscientist *Tania Singer* has been studying the neurophysiological differences between empathy and compassion. In her words: “The neural networks underlying the effects of empathy and compassion training are very different. Whereas the former increases negative emotions, the latter is associated with positive feelings of warmth and increased activation in brain networks associated with affiliation and reward.” Tania Singer

[http://www.cogneurosociety.org/empathy\\_pain/](http://www.cogneurosociety.org/empathy_pain/)

# Grounding to Sky

- Removed Google image of SKY



# The Heart of Belonging: The Afghan Women's Fresh Minds, Good Hours Group

- Removed photo of Afghan women

# Formation

- Identifying the need
  - Distress, Vulnerability and Isolation
  - Stigma
- A public mental health approach
  - Free-listing
- → Group format, design, schedule

# Group Sessions

- Collective goal: To reduce isolation, learn new skills and increase social connection with other members of their community
- LFS program goals: Promote social engagement; reduce isolation; fostering community through contacts, referrals, and connections; enhancing resilience through relationship; decrease symptoms if relevant; pilot a replicable program.
- This group is therapeutic, and therapy:
  - 10 sessions (2 planning; 8 group sessions)
  - Meet consistently (monthly) per women's preference
  - Each group is structured per best practice for group therapy and per the women's cultural practices and beliefs
  - Each group includes activity content and process time (the latter per the women's request)

# Sample Process Questions: Group 1 and 2.

- Do women get together on a regular basis in Afghanistan/Africa?
- What kinds of things did you love doing back home?
  - Were there things you especially loved doing with other women back home?
- Are there things you miss doing?
  - If so, what are they? When did you do them?
- What kinds of things would you all like to do, together?
- Why do you think its importance, helpful, meaningful to engage in activities together?
- What ideas do you have *now* for our proposed group?

# Logistical Responses:

- Meeting in a location that is easy to get to
- Include children
- Removed image of Afgan women

# Why is it important to come together in a group?

- A fresh mind
- It makes your heart softer, makes you feel better
- To learn about American culture
- To learn how to play
- To get to know each other, see each other, rely on each other
- To enjoy each other and be in community
- To help each other
- To practice English
- They are the good hours of life
- Sharing problems and good moments
- Problem solving
- Resettlement issues and the painful challenges of adjustment.
- Create space to share and to process feelings together

# Group Sessions: Content

- Based on activities that are culturally familiar, collaborative, offer opportunities to socially engage, connect, learn new skills and build confidence:
- -Cooking both Afghan and American food
- -Playing soccer
- -Bowling
- -Creating art
- -Dancing
- -Going to a local family fun center

What are your tips for making this dish delicious,  
every time?

Seasonings and LOVE: Talk to the food, infuse it with  
LOVE. And keep your eyebrows soft.

- Removed food photo



What did you learn about yourself?

1. creating new memories together creates new ideas and beliefs and possibilities

I am strong...I am not weak...I AM STRONG

- Removed bowling photo

What did dancing another women's dance teach you?  
I learned others dances; I learn that others dances are "like us".  
Dance reflects others. I learned how others feel.

- Removed dance photo

How was this similar, or different, from cooking gatherings back home?  
It's the same as back home-loud, with kids shouting and coming and going!

I CAN STILL get happy when I gather with others to eat

- Removed cooking photos

What do these candles represent for you?

New day, new beginning

Relaxation and peacefulness

We want them in all our homes so we remember to

“Sit and think”

- Removed candle photo

What is it like for you to work in the earth?

My heart was calm

I feel calm

When I touch the earth, close my eyes, I feel calm and happy

- Removed garden photo

## What did you learn about yourself?

I learned that everything in life is not easy. There are always obstacles to be removed. I learned how to remove some of them. I learned how friends can help me. We learned that we are strong as women and stronger together.

- Removed storyboard photo