
The background of the slide features a silhouette of a person walking alongside a pack animal, likely a mule or horse, carrying a large bundle on its back. They are set against a warm, orange and yellow sunset sky. The person is on the left, and the pack animal is on the right, both facing right. The overall mood is somber and evocative of displacement.

The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Psychologists' Responsibility for Human Rights and Mental Health

Lauren Weisberg,
Chad Lazzari,
Sarajane Rodgers
Gargi Roysircar

Antioch University New England

Presented at the 2016 American Psychological Association Conference



The Role of Psychologists in Helping Ameliorate the Effects of the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Lauren Weisberg, M.S.

4th yr. PsyD student

Syria

- Syria is a traditional society with a long cultural history. Importance is placed on family, religion, education, self-discipline, and respect.
- Primary language: Arabic (several different dialects)
- Major cities: Aleppo, Damascus



Pre-Conflict Aleppo



Aleppo
now



Pre-
conflict
Aleppo

Devastated buildings in Aleppo, 2014





The Syrian Refugee Crisis is predicted to be one of the worst humanitarian crises of this century.



A young Syrian girl, raising her arms because she believed the camera lens was a gun.

Aleppo Pediatric Hospital Airstrike



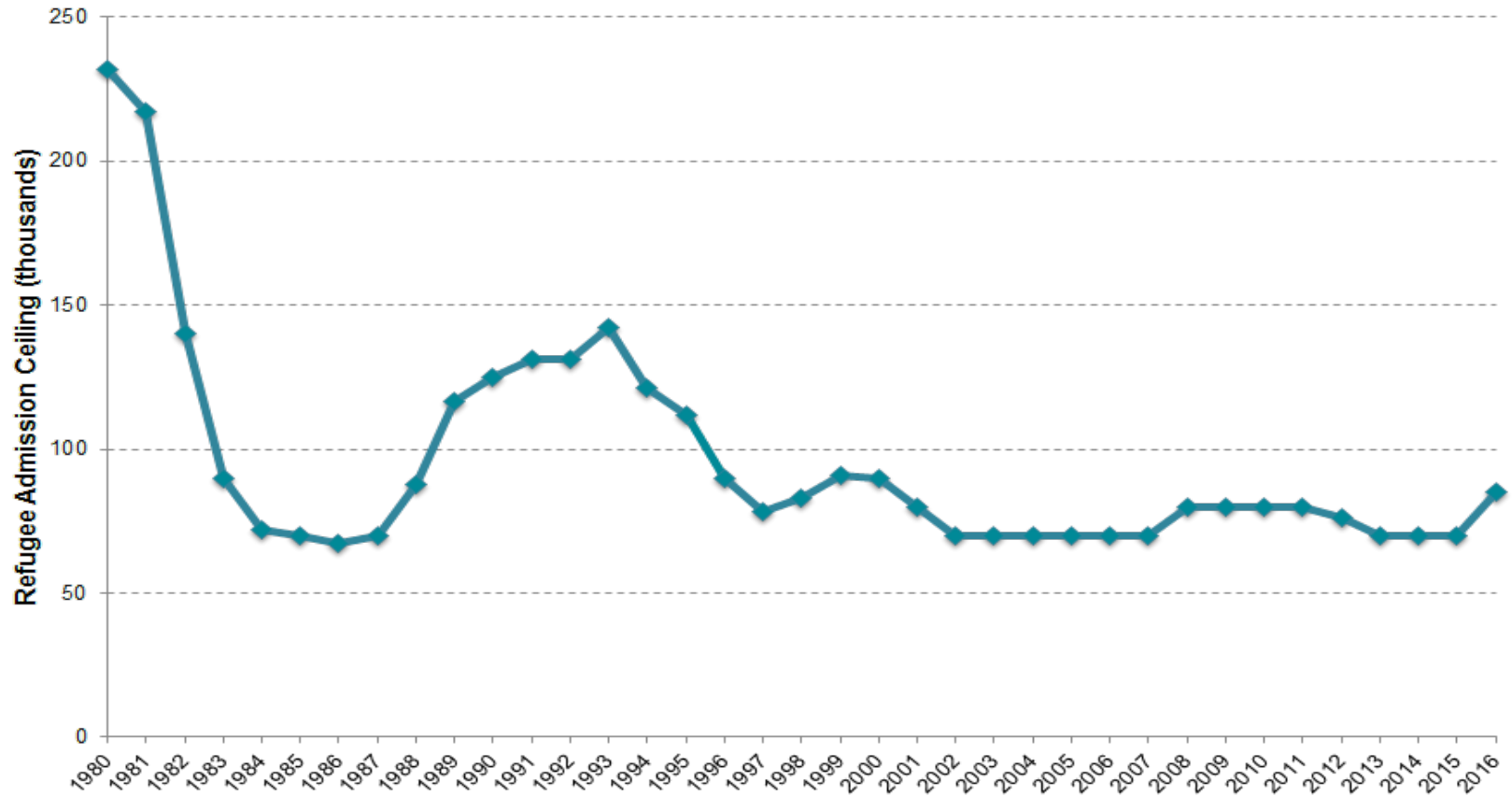




Genocide and the Syrian Refugee Crisis

- How does genocide relate to the Syrian Refugee Crisis?
- Propaganda and silencing of foreign media

Refugee Admission Ceiling in the United States





Controlling the narrative—Media portrayal



Psychologists' Responsibility

- Addressing racism, discrimination, and Islamophobia whenever possible through research and practice
- Supporting the acculturation process of refugees
- Addressing the massive amount of trauma suffered by refugees
- Supporting aide workers
 - Possibility of tele-therapy and tele-support

Islamophobia and Discrimination

Sneaking into a
COUNTRY
doesn't make you an
'**IMMIGRANT**'
any more than
breaking into a
HOUSE
makes you
'**PART OF**
THE FAMILY'

ISLAMISM

CHRISTIANITY

YOU

**SO-WHAT-IF
MUSLIMS
ARE "OFFENDED"!!**

**OVER 3000 AMERICANS WERE
MURDERED ON 9/11 IN THE NAME OF
OF ISLAM AND WE'RE SUPPOSED TO
CATER TO THEM!? I DON'T THINK SO!!**

Acknowledging Acculturation and Adjustment

- There is a large cultural adjustment from a predominately Muslim, Middle-Eastern country to the United States
- Once refugees relocate, they face a different set of challenges including
 - Alterations in diet
 - Climate change
 - Different customs and social practices
 - Unfamiliar clothing
 - New employment
 - Different family composition
 - Islamophobia

(Personal Communications, Gargi Roysircar, April 2017)



Trauma and Culturally Informed Therapy

- ▶ The effects of trauma are pervasive and long-lasting
- ▶ Culturally-sensitive treatments
 - ▶ Cambodian refugee example
 - ▶ Bosnian war refugees

Community Intervention





A Brief History of the Syrian Conflict and Refugee Crisis

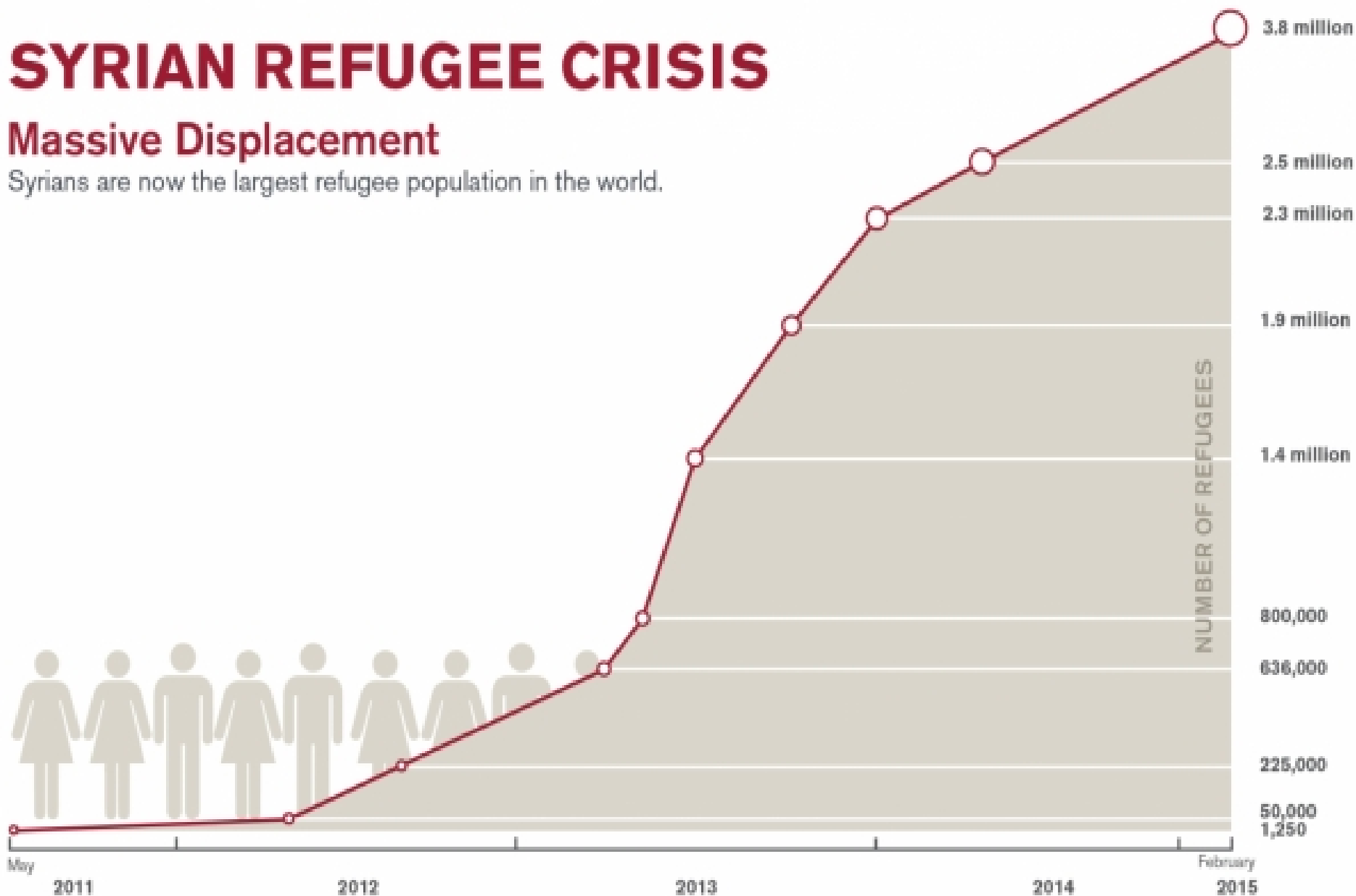
Chad Lazzari


2nd yr. PsyD student

SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Massive Displacement

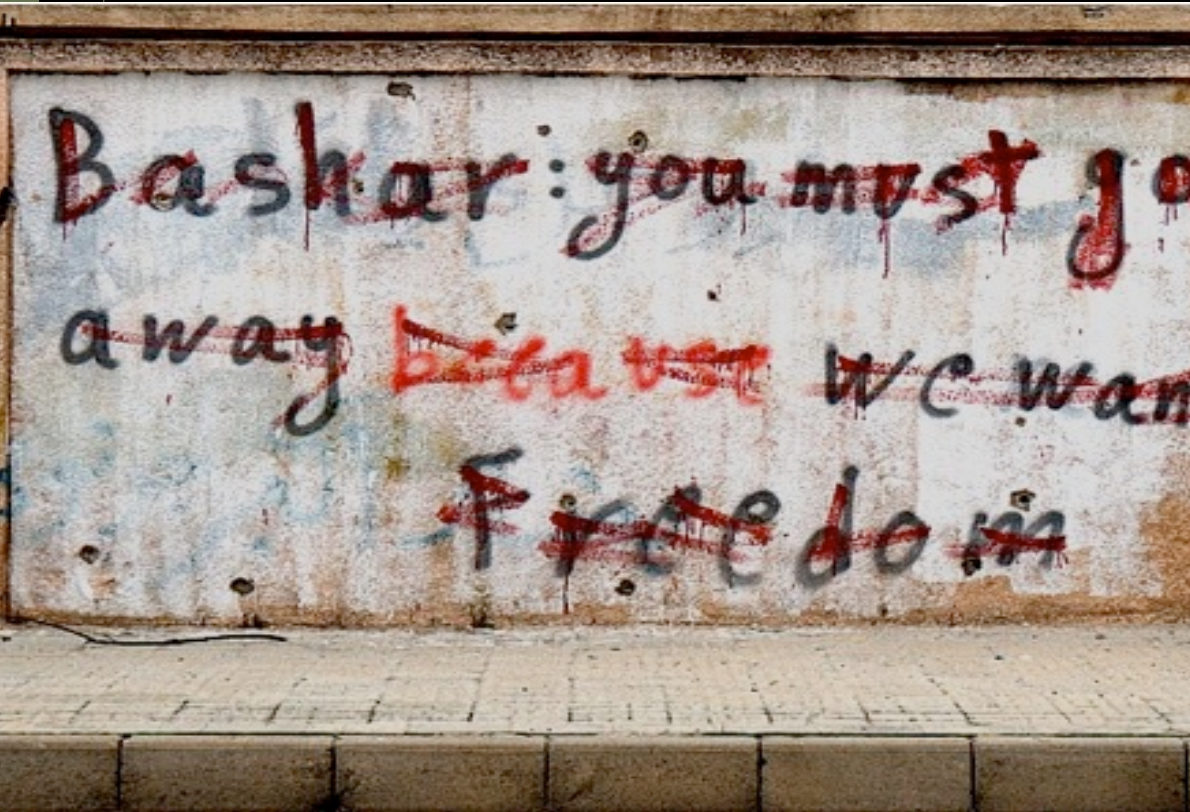
Syrians are now the largest refugee population in the world.





There are over 4.8 million Syrian refugees and 7.6 million refugees displaced within Syria. There are 13.5 million people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria.

An Arab Spring



Revolution Begins



Islamic State/ISIS/ISIL



Bombing of Syria



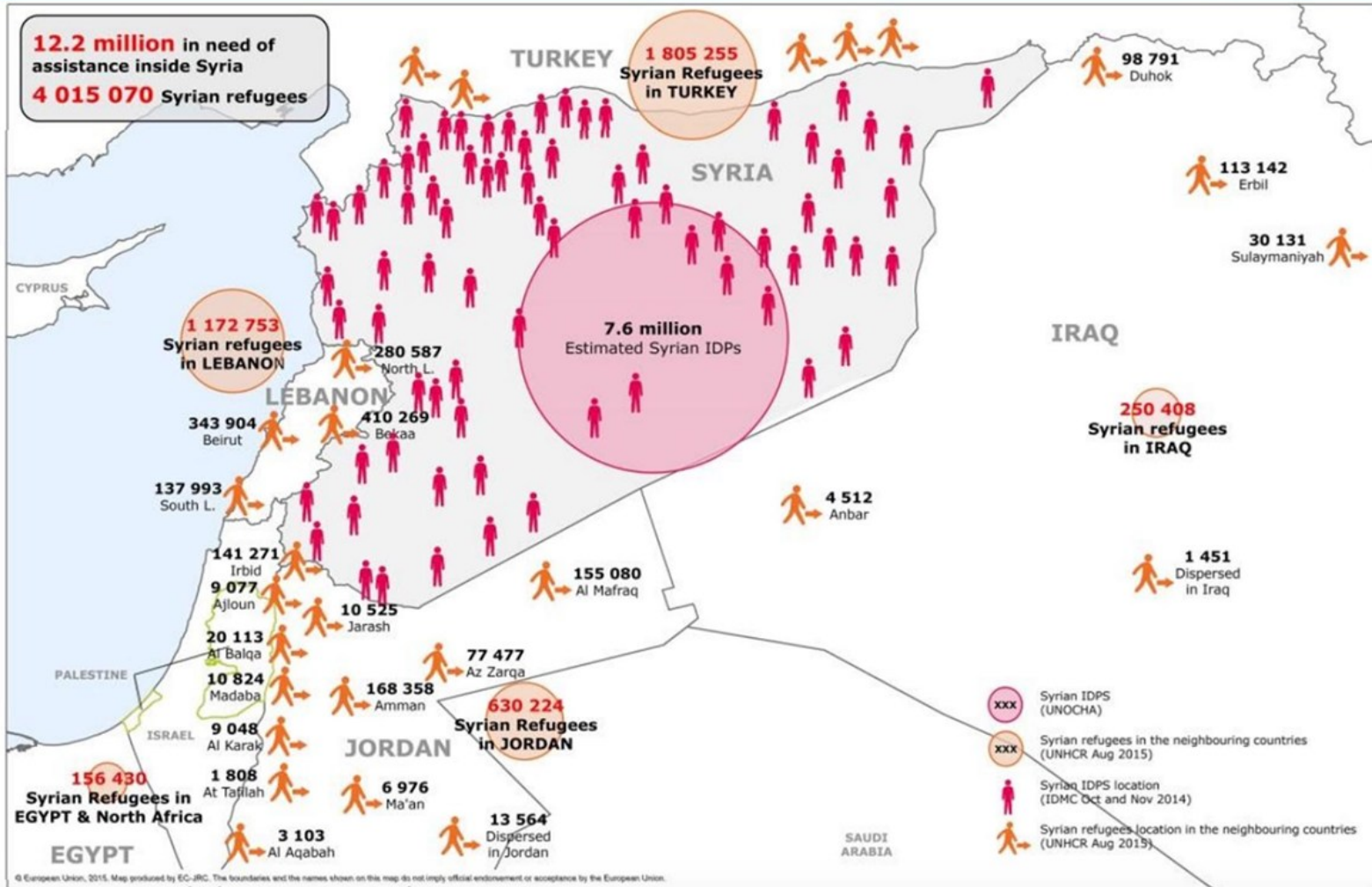
Crimes of War



Starving boy in Madera, Syria Jan 10, 2016

The Exodus

Syrian IDP's and refugees in the neighbouring countries (as of 19.08.15)



Alan Kurdi



A Dangerous Journey



Hana



Hana holding her cousin Marah as they make the bumpy ride to work in a plum orchard.

Life in Camp



Five Syrian Refugee Children Pose for a Photo at Domiz Camp in Iraq





How Are Humanitarian Efforts Bringing Assistance to Displaced Individuals' Mutlifaceted Needs?

Sarajane Rodgers, M.S.

2nd yr. PsyD student

What do refugees need?

- Improved shelters
- Clothing
- Access to food and clean water
- Reduced political and cultural tensions in high-conflict areas already low on resources
- Continued children's education
- Helping refugees, particularly children, develop ways to cope with prolonged exposure to trauma

Organizations Involved in The Crisis

- ▶ Airlink
- ▶ American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
- ▶ CARE USA
- ▶ Catholic Relief Services
- ▶ Church World Service
- ▶ Concern Worldwide
- ▶ Global Communities
- ▶ Handicap International
- ▶ International Orthodox Christian Charities
- ▶ Islamic Relief USA
- ▶ Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
- ▶ Life for Relief and Development
- ▶ Lutheran World Relief
- ▶ Mercy – USA
- ▶ Mercy Corps
- ▶ Save the Children
- ▶ Oxfam America
- ▶ Relief International
- ▶ ShelterBox USA
- ▶ Unicef
- ▶ UNHCR
- ▶ US Committee for Refugees & Immigrants
- ▶ World Food Programme USA (WFP)
- ▶ World Renew
- ▶ World Vision
- ▶ Zakat Foundation of America

Handicap International



ShelterBox



Airlink



Credit: The Guardian

Save the Children





Organizational Psychological Support for Syrian Refugees



The Psychological Consequences

Several Relevant Disorders	Sample of 6,000 Syrians	World-wide Prevalence
Depressive Disorders	20%	5.9%
Schizophrenia	10%	0.4%
Post-traumatic stress disorder	15-20%	0.4%

<https://internationalmedicalcorps.org/europe-response>

Reducing Severe Mental Disorders

- ▶ International Medical Corps and the International Aid Network opened a mobile medical unit (MMU) in Serbia
- ▶ Doctors Without Borders set up a mental health clinic providing psychosocial assistance to those in Iraq's Domeez refugee camp. Support groups for children are being utilized in northern Iraq.



Helpful Therapeutic Modalities

- ▶ Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) -
“anchor in time and context”
- ▶ Intercultural Psychotherapy technique
–building resilience through providing
cultural support



Karim

- Reads and responds to text messages in Arabic
- Analyze how the individual is doing emotionally
- Takes all prior patient and AI responses into account when responding



Local explanatory models of mental illness

Economic stressors

Jinn

Social stressors


Evil Spirits

Violence

Evil Eye

Limitations of Current Assistance

- New arrivals into the United States only receive support for the first 90 days after their arrival.
- It is difficult to provide meaningful assistance to a transient population.
- Interest decreases over time
- As new humanitarian crises arise, focus is detracted from the Syrian Refugee crisis



How can psychologists in the United States help?

Gargi Roysircar

Professor of Clinical Psychology



Statement of the Problem

As psychologists are addressing the many challenges of our global era, we are encouraged to examine the profession's assumptions and practices as these are applied within an international context whether domestically or internationally-based; and how this globalization, in turn, has an impact on the psychologist's self-definition, purpose, role, and function .


In the 21st century, as internationalization intensifies its influence around the world, psychologists in the United States (U.S.) aspire to move beyond a focus on European American-centric theories when they serve in international settings, and simultaneously endeavor to increase their understanding of mental health from the perspectives of other cultures. Psychologists are encouraged to avoid colonization and practice globalization, where the field of international psychology represents a postmodern form of consciousness and theorizing about universal human nature and conditions, such as, pain, trauma, resilience, empowerment, human dignity, and coalition-building across nationalities to stop oppression, disempowerment, and crimes against humanity.

In the past 25 years there have been dramatic changes around the globe and in the United States (U.S.): 9/11 trauma of the United States and the ensuing War on Terror, terror attacks in Paris, Brussels, Tel Aviv, Orlando, Dhaka, and Nice, bombing or bomb threats of international air flights, mass killings in U.S. educational institutions and places of entertainment, genocide in the Ukraine, continued Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the two-state solution, economic crises in Europe and North America, the Occupy Movement and Black Lives Matter activism in the U.S. against economic and racial injustice, the Arab Spring of Egypt and its call for democracy, ethnic and religious cleansing in Africa, the Balkans, Iraq, and Syria, ISIS forces overrunning the Middle East, Nigerian school girls kidnapped by Boko Haram men for sexual enslavement, exodus of millions of refugees not welcomed by receiving nations, the fall of the Soviet Union, the exponential growth of United States capitalism, liberation struggles in South American nations, and the fall of dictators in Africa and of Apartheid in South Africa.

These international events visible at the surface level through media coverage have beneath great complexity and confusion of many cultures grappling with the challenges of an ever rapidly changing world. Clearly, these fast-paced and momentous events and transitions to a new social order challenge psychologists' understanding of individual and mass trauma caused within systemic contexts, and psychologists' application of this understanding to inform research and professional practice (Roysircar, Podkova, & Pigniatiello, 2013). The enterprise of the internationalization of psychology requires multilateral and horizontal sociopolitical and sociocultural dialogs among mental health professionals working collaboratively in cross-national projects as they address the question of what it means to be human, to be local and indigenous, as well as to be communal and an individual.

Within international contexts, U.S. psychological theories and practice can be expected to be challenged philosophically, scientifically, and politically because clients, families, students, and their local communities and organizations across the globe are likely to represent and present stresses and illnesses in multitudinous ways. So proponents of psychological theories are encouraged to investigate conceptual holes in certain U.S. theories, fill these gaps with cultural constructs relevant to a particular population, and then adapt their theories to culture-specific representations (Roysircar, 2013); and practitioners are encouraged to implement culturally consistent ways of healing.

Psychologists are encouraged to examine U.S. psychology's purposes, roles, and functions as these intersect with cultural and nationality differences. Psychologists are encouraged to be reflective about the consequence of uncritically exporting therapy models and the importance of respecting and incorporating local or indigenous healing practices (Gerstein, Heppner, Stockton, Leung, & Aegisdottir, 2009). Miike (2012) summarized the significance of humility and respect when working in another culture:



Learning about cultures is one thing.
Learning from cultures is another. We can be very arrogant and ethnocentric, but we can still learn about other cultures. Learning from cultures, on the other hand, requires us to be humble and modest to understand and appreciate other cultures. (Miike 2012, p. 67)

References: 1st Presenter

- Amnesty International. (2016). 8 ways to solve the world refugee crisis: Protecting refugees is not somebody else's problem. Retrieved from: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2015/10/eightsolutions-world-refugee-crisis/> (1)
- Amnesty International. (2016). Annual report: Amnesty International. Retrieved from: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/report-syria/> (2)
- Amnesty International. (2016). Syria: UN Security Council must step up pressure to end attacks on hospitals as hundreds killed in Aleppo. Retrieved from: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/05/syria-un-security-council-must-step-up-pressure-to-end-attacks-on-hospitals-as-hundreds-killed-in-aleppo/> (3)
- Amnesty International. (2016). Resettlement is a lifeline open to some of the world's most vulnerable refugees. A young family from Syria tells us what a huge difference moving to Norway has made in their lives. Retrieved from: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2015/10/syrian-refugees-new-life-norway-resettlement> (4)
- Amnesty International. (2016). Syria: Comprehensive humanitarian access needed after aid delivery to besieged Daraya thwarted and followed by deadly shelling. Retrieved from: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/05/syria-aid-delivery-to-besieged-daraya/> (5)
- Barnard, A. (2016). Family of Marie Colvin, slain U.S. journalist, sues Syria. Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/10/world/middleeast/marie-colvin-family-suessyria.html>
- Hinton, D.E., Pich, V., Chean, D., Safren, S.A., & Pollack, M.H. (2006). Somatic-focused therapy for traumatized refugees: Treating posttraumatic stress disorder and comorbid neck-focused panic attacks among Cambodian refugees. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Training*, 43 (4), 491-505.
- Kruse, J., Joksimovic, L., Cavka, M., Woller, W., & Schmitz, N. (2009). Effects of trauma-focused psychotherapy upon war refugees. *Journal of Trauma Stress*, 22, 585-92. Doi: 10.1002/jts.20477

References: 1st Presenter

- ▶ <http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/poll-majority-americans-oppose-accepting-syrian-refugees-n465816>
- ▶ <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugees-and-asylees-united-states/>
- ▶ <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2013/07/un-calls-syrian-refugee-crisis-worst-since-rwandan-genocide/>
- ▶ <http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/refugees>
- ▶ <http://www.holocaustawarenessmuseum.org/content/Art-From-Within-Terezin>
- ▶ <https://joelartista.com/syrian-refugees-the-zaatari-project-jordan/>
- ▶ <http://www.heritageforpeace.org/syria-culture-and-heritage/>

References: 2nd Presenter

- Dominus, S. (2015). The displaced: Hana. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/08/magazine/thedisplacedhana.html?smid=nytcore-ipad-share&smprod=nytcore-ipad>
- Quick facts: What you need to know about the Syria crisis. (2016). Retrieved February 08, 2016, from <https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/iraq-jordan-lebanon-turkey-syria/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-syria-crisis>
- Silverstein, J. (2015). The displaced: Introduction. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/08/magazine/the-displaced-introduction.html?smid=nytcore-ipad-share&smprod=nytcore-ipad&_r=0
- Syria: The story of the conflict. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>

References: 3rd Presenter

Airlink Inc. Help us plan for the next disaster... (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.airlinkflight.org/donate>

Handicap International. (2016). Support Syrian Refugees. Retrieved from https://handicapinternational.nationbuilder.com/syria_appeal_donate

International Medical Corps. (2015). Europe Refugee Crisis. Retrieved from <https://internationalmedicalcorps.org/europe-response>

Kelland, Kate. (2015). Psychologists are Designing Refugee-Focused Therapies for Migrants. Huffpost. Retrieved from http://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_56606c8be4bo72e9d1c4f21a

Leigh, Karen. (2014, August 1). Syria's Mental Health Crisis. The New York Times: The Opinion Pages. Retrieved from http://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/08/01/syrias-mental-health-crisis/?_r=0

Save the Children. (2016). Donate to the Syrian Children's Relief Fund. Retrieved from <https://goo.gl/7WkIVf>

ShelterBox (2016). Donate. Retrieved from <http://www.shelterbox.org/donate.php>

Solon, Olivia. (2016). Karim the AI delivers psychological support to Syrian refugees. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/mar/22/karim-the-ai-delivers-psychological-support-to-syrian-refugees>

Zellman, Henrike. (2013). "We Spend Time" and "We Listen": Mental Health Care for Syrian Refugees in Iraq. Medecins Sans Frontiers. Retrieved from <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/news-stories/voice-field/we-spend-time-and-we-listen-mental-health-care-syrian-refugees-iraq>

References: 4th Presenter

Gerstein, L. H., Heppner, P. P., Ægisdóttir, S., Leung, S. A., & Norsworthy, K. L. (2009). *International handbook of cross-cultural counseling: Cultural assumptions and practices of worldview*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Miike, Y. (2012). "Harmony without uniformity": An Asiacentric worldview and its communicative implications. In L. A. Samovar, R. E. Porter, & E. R. McDaniel (Eds.), *Intercultural communication: A reader* (12th ed., pp. 36–47). Belmont, CA: Thompson.

Roysircar, G. (2013). Disaster counseling: A Haitian family case post January 12, 2010 earthquake. In S. Poyrazil & C. Thompson (Eds.), *International case studies in mental health* (pp.155-180). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452240589.n10>

Roysircar, G., Podkova, M., & Pignatiello, V. (2013). Crisis intervention, social class, and counseling: Macrolevel disaster effects. In W. M. Liu (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of social class in counseling* (pp.144-163). New York, NY: Oxford University

Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195398250.013.0009>

Image References: 2nd Presenter

Slide 1: <https://www.usmeyouthnetwork.org/category/culture/>
Bottom: <http://www.solidarity.net.au/imperialism/syrias-armed-revolt-is-product-of-popular-uprising/>

Slide 2: Top: <http://www.sharnoffsglobalviews.com/blaming-the-victims/>
Right: <https://lebanonglc.wordpress.com/2012/10/26/killing-in-the-name-of/>

Slide 3: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2016/01/08/un-calls-access-starving-syrians/78521220/>

Slide 4: <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2015-09/11/europe-syria-refugee-crisis-maps>

Slide 5: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_of_Alan_Kurdi

Slide 6: *Lynsey Addario for The New York Times* (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/08/magazine/the-displaced-hana.html?_r=0)

Slide 7: Top: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/refugee-crisis-greek-officials-register-15-000-migrants-in-a-single-day-1.3220287>

Bottom:

<http://img3.yourmiddleeast.com/media/news/images/2015/660x39092c4f3c2220914369926cffffe8e1849f190a940.jpg>

Slide 8: <http://donate.unhcr.org/neilandgeorgina>

Slide 9: www.rescue.org/news/photo-essays/disaster-uprooted-syrians

Slide 10: https://d2zyf8ayvvg1369.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/styles/imagestack/adaptive-image/public/MercyCorps_SyriaCrisisRefugeesGraph_0215.jpg

Image References: 3rd Presenter

Slide 3: <http://www.shelterbox.org/donate.php>

Slide 4: <http://www.shelterbox.org/donate.php>

Slide 5: <http://www.airlinkflight.org/donate>

Slide 6: <http://www.shelterbox.org/donate.php>

RefR

RRRRER

Contact Information

Lauren Weisberg

lweisberg@antioch.edu

Chad Lazzari

clazzari@antioch.edu

Sarajane Rodgers

srodgers1@antioch.edu

Gargi Roysircar

groysircar@antioch.edu

“The knowledge of horrible events periodically intrudes into public awareness but is rarely retained for long. Denial, repression, and dissociation operate on a social as well as an individual level”

(Herman, 1997, p. 2)