

# WP2 - Training Kit and Trainings for VET Professionals Toolkit

Developed by



## Training Kit for Trainers: Mental Well-being Support for Refugee Participants in Vocational-Educational Settings

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## I. Introduction of the project NewFuture – Better mental wellbeing for the refugees in their new future

### Goals of the Project

The NewFuture project is designed specifically for vocational education and training (VET) professionals who work closely with course participants entitled to asylum and aims to equip these professionals with skills to correctly interpret certain emergency situations, provide appropriate support, improve cultural competences and better understand and respect specific refugee cultures.

In addition to supporting VET professionals, the New Future project is dedicated to raising awareness among refugees about their mental health, promoting self-presentation and self-reflection, and empowering potential volunteers and community leaders. By doing so, New Future seeks to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for both VET professionals and the refugees they work with.

These objectives are primarily achieved through the development of a comprehensive "Training Kit for Trainers," the implementation of "Train the Trainers" sessions, national workshops, pilot projects, and the creation of a framework for a guide aimed at volunteers and community leaders.

### Training Kit for Trainers: goals & parts

The comprehensive training kit is equally for VET providers and VET professionals, refugees, asylum seekers and community volunteers and leaders. It offers training materials for educators, aimed at fostering supportive learning environments.

- A handbook consisting of 10 comprehensive modules, designed to equip trainers with theoretical background, knowledge and skills to integrate vocational education and training (VET) with mental health support, to foster a supportive environment that encourages personal and professional growth,
- A Toolkit offering training materials and techniques for implementation in group training, including exercises related to the 10 modules for train-the-trainer settings or training of refugees and asylum seekers,
- A Methodology Guide with a detailed outline of the training sessions
- Presentations for the visualization of the units of the handbook
- Engaging animated videos to promote mental wellbeing and mental health awareness

### How to use the Training Kit?

Based on the Methodology Guide with the training outlines, relevant topics for their work with the final beneficiaries can be selected from the handbook by VET professional and implemented in their group training, applying the allocated exercises from the Toolkit, the presentations for visualization of the contents and the animated videos into the training of refugees.

## II. Challenges to mental health and wellbeing of refugees

### 1. Context of asylum in the partner countries

(psycho-social-cultural considerations)

Refugees coming in the EU encounter numerous hurdles that can jeopardise their integration and well-being. These problems are usually divided into three categories: socioeconomic integration, linguistic barriers, and mental health. Migration itself does not count as a risk factor for health, but the circumstances of migration are often associated with physical, mental, and social health disorders.

Across the partner countries, there are significant efforts to support the psycho-social and cultural needs of refugees. While the extent and quality of these services vary, each country emphasizes the importance of mental health support, cultural sensitivity, and social integration. Collaborative efforts between government agencies and non-profit organizations are essential to address the complex needs of refugees and facilitate their successful integration into society.

### 2. Data about refugees and the labour market

*(based on the SoA Report)*

The employment landscape for refugees in the EU is complex and varies across MS. Despite efforts, refugees face lower employment rates compared to EU citizens. These rates gradually improve as refugees integrate into their host countries (EC's Joint Research Centre, 2023).

#### Employment Rates and Patterns:

- Initially lower, refugee employment rates improve over time. The initial years are crucial as refugees navigate legal, language, and cultural barriers (Eurostat, 2023).
- Inclusive labour market policies and robust integration programs, like those in Germany, contribute to higher employment rates among refugees (European Website on Integration, 2023).

#### Demographic and Geographic Variations:

- Younger and male refugees have higher employment rates than older refugees and females, influenced such factors as flexibility and family (Eurostat, 2023).
- Northern/Western Europe, including Sweden and the Netherlands, shows higher refugee employment rates due to comprehensive integration policies (EC, 2023).

#### Types of Employment and Sectoral Distribution:

- Refugees are often in agriculture, manufacturing, and low-skilled service jobs, due to immediate job availability and less language requirements (Eurostat, 2023).
- Many refugees, particularly those with professional qualifications, face a mismatch between skills and available jobs, often due to credential recognition challenges.

#### Employment Integration Over Time:

- Refugee employment prospects improve with integration programs that include language training and skills recognition. Countries investing in such programs see quicker improvements.
- Longitudinal studies show that the longer refugees stay in an EU country, the more likely they are to find stable and skill-appropriate employment, underscoring the importance of long-term integration strategies (European Commission, 2023).

### 3. The major mental wellbeing and/or mental health challenges faced by refugees regarding labour market entry in their fields of expertise or according to their educational status

*(based on the SoA Report)*

#### What are the current challenges faced by refugees in the EU?

- The mental and emotional well-being of refugees in EU countries is significantly impacted by a range of factors, including pre-migration experiences, the migration journey, post-migration factors, and specific circumstances.
- Refugees coming in the EU encounter numerous hurdles that can jeopardise their integration and well-being. These problems are usually divided into three categories: socioeconomic integration, linguistic barriers, and mental health. Migration itself does not count as a risk factor for health, but the circumstances of migration are often associated with physical, mental, and social health disorders.
- One of the most significant problems that refugees encounter is finding work and achieving economic self-sufficiency. This can be attributed to several factors, including 1) accreditation of qualifications (refugees may struggle to have their foreign qualifications recognised in the EU, limiting their employment opportunities); 2) language barriers (language proficiency is often a prerequisite for securing employment in the EU, which means that refugees may face difficulties in learning the local language, especially if they lack prior exposure); 3) lack of work experience (refugees who left their home countries abruptly may not have the work experience required by employers in the EU). Adding to these are other limitations to more vulnerable people, such as women, older and disabled refugees. The fit between skills levels and jobs remains problematic, threatening de-skilling and depression of the refugees.
- Furthermore, because language proficiency is essential for effective communication, social integration, and employment opportunities, refugees frequently face challenges in learning the local language due to: 1) limited or no access to language courses (refugee camps and reception centres may not have adequate language training facilities); 2) cultural differences (unfamiliarity with local cultural norms and idioms can further complicate language acquisition); and 3) psychological barriers (the trauma of displacement and resettlement can hinder refugees' motivation and focus on language learning).

#### How has migration, war, or other traumatic events impacted the mental and emotional well-being of refugees in these countries?

- Pre-migration experiences such as persecution, violence, loss of loved ones, and traumatic events can cause severe psychological distress, leading to PTSD, depression, anxiety

disorders, and other mental health problems. These events are usually associated with migrants crossing the EU external borders in an irregular manner in the hope of creating a better future for themselves and their families. A 2022 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) inquiry found out that two out of three refugee women and one out of two men reported depression, anxiety or panic attacks, difficulties in sleeping and concentrating, or loss of self-confidence or feeling vulnerable.

- Furthermore, specific circumstances also impact the mental and emotional well-being of refugees, such as cultural and ethnic differences, with refugees facing difficulties adapting to a new culture and integrating into a different social environment, leading to feelings of isolation, alienation, and cultural shock and language barriers, since the inability to communicate effectively in the host language can hinder social interactions, access to services, and employment opportunities, contributing to feelings of isolation, frustration, and marginalisation.

#### 4. Key principles for promoting mental health/mental wellbeing among refugees

Addressing the mental wellbeing of refugees in vocational-educational trainings in the European Union is of crucial importance for several reasons:

- Firstly, refugees often face significant mental health challenges due to the trauma they have experienced in their home countries and during their journeys to the EU. These challenges can greatly affect their ability to successfully participate in vocational-educational trainings and ultimately integrate into the host society.
- Secondly, mental wellbeing is not solely the absence of mental illness, but also the presence of positive qualities that contribute to resilience and overall well-being. By addressing mental wellbeing, vocational-educational trainings can provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes the participants' engagement, motivation, and sense of purpose.
- Moreover, attending to the mental wellbeing of refugees can also enhance the overall effectiveness of vocational-educational trainings by improving participants' ability to manage stress and adapt to new environments. Ultimately, prioritizing mental wellbeing in vocational-educational trainings for refugees can contribute to their successful integration, improved mental wellbeing and mental health outcomes, and overall well-being in the European Union.

### III. Training Modules

## Module 1 - Understanding Trauma and Resilience

This module on Understanding Trauma and Resilience is designed for VET professionals working with refugees in VET settings. It aims to equip trainers with the essential skills and knowledge to understand refugee trauma, its causes, psychological consequences, and strategies to foster resilience.

### Objectives

1. To help VET professionals define what refugee trauma is and be able to identify its various causes and triggers.
2. To enhance VET professionals' competence in identifying the psychological consequences of refugee trauma, including PTSD, depression, and anxiety, and understand their impact on mental health.
3. To empower trainers to understand the concept of resilience and how refugees cope with their trauma.
4. To equip trainers with practical strategies and techniques to strengthen resilience among refugees, promoting their mental well-being in VET settings.

### Activities

#### Activity 1#: Understanding refugee trauma and its causes

**Goal:** define what refugee trauma is and identify its various causes and triggers.

**Description:** This activity aims to provide VET professionals with a comprehensive understanding of refugee trauma, including its definition, causes, and triggers. It particularly focuses on deepening their knowledge and enabling them to recognise the complexities of trauma experienced by refugees.

#### Steps:

1. **Presentation on refugee trauma**
2. **Case study analysis of different refugee traumas**
3. **Group discussion and reflection**

#### Step 1: Presentation on refugee trauma

This step is about defining refugee trauma, discuss the types of traumas commonly experienced by refugees, and identify various causes and triggers of trauma (e.g., conflict, displacement, loss, violence). VET professionals can use, for example, slides, handouts, videos of expert talks or real-life testimonials, if available.

**Refugee trauma** refers to the psychological and emotional distress experienced by individuals who have been forced to flee their home countries due to conflict, persecution, or violence. This trauma encompasses a range of adverse experiences, including exposure to life-threatening situations, loss of loved ones, separation from family, displacement, and the challenges of adapting to new environments (Heather Savazzi, 2018; Vukčević Marković M, Bobić A, Živanović M, 2023).

Refugee trauma can lead to **severe mental health issues** such as (Heather Savazzi, 2018; Henkelmann JR, de Best S, et al, 2020):



### **1. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**

It is characterised by severe anxiety, flashbacks, nightmares, and intrusive thoughts related to traumatic events. Refugees with PTSD may experience hypervigilance, emotional numbness, and difficulty concentrating, significantly impairing their daily functioning.

### **2. Depression**

It involves persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a lack of interest or pleasure in activities. Refugees experiencing depression may struggle with low energy, changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and thoughts of self-harm or suicide, hindering their ability to engage in daily life.

### **3. Anxiety**

It encompasses excessive worry, fear, and nervousness. Refugees with anxiety may experience panic attacks, constant worry about safety and the future, and physical symptoms like a racing heart and difficulty breathing, affecting their overall quality of life.

### **4. Adjustment disorder**

It arises from difficulty adjusting to significant life changes or stressors, such as resettling in a new country. Symptoms include emotional distress, irritability, and behavioural issues, making it challenging for refugees to adapt to new environments and routines.

### **5. Somatic symptom disorder**

It involves experiencing physical symptoms, such as pain or fatigue, that cannot be fully explained by medical conditions. Refugees with this disorder often focus excessively on their symptoms, leading to significant distress and impairment in their daily activities.

## **Step 2: Case study analysis of different refugee traumas**

This step provides VET professionals with different case studies that depict different scenarios of refugee trauma. Each case study should highlight specific causes and triggers of trauma. Trainers can split the participants into small groups and assign each group a case study, asking them to analyse the case and identify the trauma causes and triggers. Printed or digital cases studies and worksheets for notes can be used.

The following are the **most common types of causes and triggers of refugee trauma** (Bashir U & Khan S, 2024; Heather Savazzi, 2018; Theisen-Womersley G, 2021):

#### **1. Conflict-related trauma**

It involves the psychological and emotional distress caused by exposure to war, armed conflict, or civil unrest. Refugees often witness or experience direct violence, including bombings, shootings, and other life-threatening events. This type of trauma can lead to severe anxiety, hypervigilance, and PTSD, as individuals struggle to cope with the memories and fear induced by such horrific experiences.

#### **2. Displacement and loss**

It involves trauma stemming from the forced removal from one's home and community. Refugees often leave behind their homes, belongings, jobs, and social networks, leading to a profound sense of loss and instability. The uncertainty about the future and the struggle to rebuild a life in an unfamiliar place can cause significant stress, depression, and a feeling of rootlessness.

### 3. Separation from family

It occurs when refugees are separated from their loved ones during their journey to safety. This separation can be temporary or permanent, and the uncertainty surrounding the well-being of family members can cause intense emotional pain, loneliness, and anxiety. The lack of familiar support exacerbates feelings of isolation and can hinder the healing process.

### 4. Violence and persecution

This trauma is experienced by refugees who have fled systemic violence and targeted persecution based on their ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, or other personal characteristics. The fear and reality of being targeted and harmed can lead to deep-seated mistrust, chronic fear, and a pervasive sense of insecurity, even after reaching a place of safety.

### 5. Acculturation stress

It refers to the psychological impact of adapting to a new culture and environment. Refugees face challenges such as language barriers, cultural differences, and social isolation, which can lead to feelings of frustration, confusion, and helplessness. The process of acculturation can be stressful as refugees strive to integrate into a new society while preserving their cultural identity.

### 6. Survivor guilt

It is the feeling of guilt experienced by refugees who have survived life-threatening situations when others, including loved ones, did not. This type of trauma is characterised by a sense of unworthiness and self-blame, as survivors struggle with the question of why they were spared. Survivor guilt can impede the healing process and contribute to depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues.

### Case studies

The case studies provided are based on real-life situations known to be experienced by refugees focused on refugee trauma within the context of VET, but do not reflect concrete cases and should thus be considered as examples for the purpose of the activity.

**Case study 1:** Ahmed, a 35-year-old refugee who fled a war-torn region, resettles in a European country and enrolls in a VET programme. He suffers from PTSD, experiencing severe flashbacks and nightmares that disrupt his sleep and leave him exhausted during training sessions. His avoidance of certain sounds and crowded places makes regular class attendance difficult. Hypervigilance and emotional numbness hinder his ability to connect with peers and instructors, affecting group activities and collaboration. Consequently, his focus and performance suffer, causing him to fall behind in coursework and struggle with assessments.

**Case study 2:** Maria, a 28-year-old refugee from Central America, arrives in the United States after experiencing severe gang violence and familial separation. She enrolls in a language and VET programme but struggles with persistent sadness and hopelessness, affecting her motivation and class attendance. Her depression leads to disinterest in activities, sleep difficulties, appetite changes, weight loss, and low energy, making it hard to participate in training and engage with peers. Consequently, her frequent absences further isolate her and impede her progress in the programme.

**Case study 3:** Hanh, a 22-year-old refugee from Vietnam, resettles in a new country after a typhoon destroyed her village. Enrolled in a VET programme, she struggles with constant worry about her family's safety and faces cultural and language barriers. Hanh experiences frequent panic attacks, causing a racing heart, shortness of breath, and a sense of doom, disrupting her concentration during classes. Her anxiety hinders participation in group activities and social events, leading to isolation and stress, which negatively affects her learning and performance.

### Step 3: Group discussion and reflection

This step emphasizes the analysis of each group's case study within a larger group. VET professionals should facilitate the discussion to compare findings and reflect on the diversity of trauma experiences by refugees. They should also encourage participants to discuss common themes and reflect on how this understanding can be applied in their VET settings. Flipcharts, markers for notetaking during discussions, reflection journals or notepads can be used.

#### Key areas for reflection

1. Reflect on the various causes and triggers of trauma identified in the case studies. Discuss how these triggers manifest in the behaviour and emotional response of refugees. How can recognising these triggers help VET professionals provide more effective support?
2. Consider the diversity of trauma experiences among refugees as highlighted in the case studies. How do individual backgrounds, cultures, and personal histories influence the trauma experienced by refugees? Discuss the importance of a personalised approach in addressing refugee trauma within VET settings.
3. Reflect on how the understanding of refugee trauma and its causes can be applied in your VET practice. What strategies or practices can be implemented to create a supportive and trauma-informed environment for refugee participants? Consider how this knowledge can improve your interactions and interventions.

#### Activity 2#: Supporting resilience and coping mechanisms in refugees

**Goal:** understand the concept of resilience and how refugees cope with their trauma.

**Description:** This activity aims to equip VET professionals with a comprehensive understanding of resilience and the coping mechanisms employed by refugees. It particularly focuses on having them gaining practical strategies to support resilience and recovery in their work with refugees.

#### Steps:

1. **Inviting experts with refugee experiences**
2. **Role-playing scenarios for active listening and empathetic response**
3. **Group art mini project of a resilience and recovery collective art piece**

#### Step 1: Inviting experts with refugee experiences

This step is about inviting individuals with refugee experiences who are aware of their traumas and able to speak about them. These experts should be invited to share their personal stories of trauma and resilience, providing firsthand insights into the coping mechanisms they have developed. VET professionals should make seating arrangements for a panel discussion and provide a microphone (if needed), as well as make sure there is a quiet, respectful environment for sharing.

**Resilience** is the ability to withstand, adapt, and recover from adversity, challenges, and significant sources of stress. It encompasses the psychological, emotional, and social strengths that individuals draw upon to navigate difficult situations and bounce back from hardships. Resilience involves a dynamic process of positive adaptation in the face of trauma, adversity, or significant stressors, enabling individuals to maintain or regain mental well-being and functionality (Heather Savazzi, 2018).

This capacity for resilience is influenced by various factors, which collectively contribute to an individual's ability to cope with and overcome life's challenges. For refugees, the following factors can be put forwards as crucial examples of **trauma coping mechanisms** (Heather Savazzi, 2018; Paudyal P, Tattan M, Cooper MJF, 2021; Maier K, Konaszewski K, et al, 2022):

## 1. Social support

Building relationships with family, friends, and community members provides belonging and security. Support groups and networks offer emotional support, practical help, and shared experiences. A supportive social network reduces isolation, promotes well-being, and enhances resilience by offering a safe space for expressing emotions and receiving empathy.

## 2. Mental health services

Access to counselling, psychotherapy, and psychiatric care helps individuals process trauma and develop coping strategies. Specialized therapies like cognitive-behavioural therapy address PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Mental health professionals educate on trauma and resilience, empowering refugees to manage their mental health, fostering recovery, and enabling them to rebuild their lives.

## 3. Cultural and spiritual practices

Engaging in cultural traditions and religious practices provides continuity, identity, and comfort. These activities help process grief, find meaning, and foster hope. Community services, prayer, meditation, and traditional ceremonies help refugees reconnect with their cultural roots and spiritual beliefs, offering solace and control amid uncertainty and loss.

## 4. Physical activity

Regular exercise, like walking, yoga, or team sports, reduces stress, anxiety, and depression by releasing endorphins and improving sleep and physical health. It fosters social connections, provides routine, and offers a constructive outlet for emotions, contributing to overall mental and physical well-being.

## 5. Creative expression

Creative activities like art, music, and writing help individuals express emotions and process experiences non-verbally. Art and music therapy, along with writing workshops, provide structured expression opportunities, aiding refugees in understanding trauma. These activities foster achievement, empowerment, healing, and resilience.

### Key aspects for invited individuals to focus their presentation

1. Can you share specific examples of coping mechanisms you have used to manage and overcome the trauma you experienced as a refugee that can serve as valuable lessons for VET professionals?
2. What challenges and/or obstacles did you face in your journey towards resilience and how did you navigate them? Provide a brief overview of your resilience journey.
3. How can VET professionals incorporate these elements into their support strategies? What advice would you give to VET professionals to better support refugees dealing with trauma?

### Step 2: Role-playing scenarios for active listening and empathetic response

In this step, participants should engage in role-playing scenarios to practice empathy and active listening. They should be divided into pairs or small groups, where one person takes on the role of a refugee sharing their experiences, and the other practices active listening and empathetic response. For this, pre-written scenario cards and guidelines for active listening and empathetic response such as the ones presented below can be provided, as well as a safe space for role-playing. Participants can also base their role-play in the examples provided by the invited individuals with refugee experiences.

**Active listening** is a communication technique where the listener fully concentrates, understands, responds, and remembers what is being said. Unlike passive listening, it involves engaging with the

speaker through verbal and non-verbal cues, ensuring the speaker feels heard and valued. It emphasizes understanding over replying and includes paraphrasing to confirm understanding and show empathy (Tustonja, M, Topić S, et al, 2024).

**Empathetic response** is the act of recognising and validating another person's emotions by expressing understanding and compassion toward their experiences. It involves putting oneself in the other person's shoes and genuinely attempting to feel what they are feeling, thus creating a connection based on shared human experiences. An empathetic response goes beyond mere sympathy; it requires active engagement and communication that acknowledges the other person's feelings without judgment. This can be expressed through verbal affirmations, such as "I understand how you feel," or non-verbal gestures, such as a comforting touch or a reassuring smile (Tustonja, M, Topić S, et al, 2024).

For VET professionals, active listening and empathetic response are vital in supporting refugees' trauma. These techniques build trust and create a supportive environment, making refugees feel heard and understood.

### **Role-playing scenario-cards**

The role-playing scenario-cards provided are based on real-life situations known to be experienced by refugees focused on trauma and coping mechanisms within the context of VET, but do not reflect concrete cases and should thus be considered as examples for the purpose of the activity.

**Scenario card 1:** During a VET session, Ahmed (role 1), a refugee student, becomes distressed and anxious after a loud noise, showing signs of a flashback. The VET professional (role 2) should demonstrate active listening and empathy by acknowledging his distress, offering reassurance, and providing a safe space for Ahmed to discuss his feelings or take a break.

**Scenario card 2:** Maria (role 1), a refugee in a VET programme, frequently misses classes and seems withdrawn. The VET professional (role 2) should use active listening to understand Maria's challenges, validate her feelings, and explore support options like counselling services or workload adjustments to help her manage better.

**Scenario card 3:** Hanh (role 1), a refugee student, shows signs of anxiety, avoiding group activities and struggling to concentrate, leading to declining performance. The VET professional (role 2) should practice empathetic response by creating a supportive conversation, acknowledging her anxiety, and collaborating on strategies like flexible deadlines or extra help to reduce her stress.

### **Key practices of active listening**

1. Ensure your body language conveys openness and attentiveness by making eye contact, nodding, and leaning slightly forward. Avoid crossing arms or looking away. Positive body language helps refugees feel heard and valued, building trust and creating a supportive learning environment.
2. Reflect the refugee's thoughts in your own words to show active engagement and ensure accurate understanding. For example, say, "It sounds like you are feeling overwhelmed by the language barrier." This practice validates their experiences and allows for clarification.
3. Use open-ended questions to encourage refugees to express themselves, such as "Can you tell me more about your challenges?" or "How do you feel about your progress?". This approach provides richer insights and helps tailor support strategies to meet their specific needs.

### **Key practices of empathetic response**

1. Acknowledge and validate refugees' emotions by expressing understanding, e.g., "It is understandable to feel overwhelmed given everything you have been through." This fosters a

sense of safety and trust, helping them feel understood, respected, and supported in the learning environment.

2. Express empathy through words and actions, like saying, "I am here to help," and offering support. Demonstrating genuine compassion builds emotional connections, reduces refugees' stress and anxiety, and helps them focus on their training and personal development.
3. Provide consistent support and encouragement to refugees, such as saying, "I believe in your ability to succeed," or offering practical assistance like additional tutoring. This boosts their confidence and motivation, reinforcing they are not alone and enhancing their engagement.

### **Step 3: Group art mini project of a resilience and recovery collective art piece**

This step is about having VET professionals working together on a group art mini project to create a collective art piece through drawing, painting, or collage-making representing resilience and recovery and how can VET professionals support refugees with a trauma in a class setting. This creative exercise is expected to encourage expression and collaboration, allowing participants to explore and visualize the concept of resilience in a tangible way. For this, art suppliers (e.g., paper, paints, markers, collage materials), a large canvas or board for the collective piece, and tables for group work are needed.

#### **Key insights to inspire the collective art piece**

- Use symbols like a tree, phoenix, or butterfly to represent refugees' growth and healing from trauma, emphasizing the strength and resilience they develop through support and education.
- Visuals of unity, such as interconnected hands or a cultural tapestry, highlight collective support and community.
- Depict pathways and journeys, like a winding path or steppingstones, to illustrate refugees' transition from trauma to resilience with VET professionals' guidance.

### **Activity 3#: coming up with practical strategies and techniques to strengthen resilience**

**Goal:** promote the mental well-being of refugees in a VET setting by developing and implementing practical strategies and techniques to strengthen their resilience towards trauma.

**Description:** This activity aims to equip trainers to strengthen resilience among refugees. It particularly focuses on having them develop and implement practical strategies and techniques to promote refugees' well-being in VET settings.

#### **Steps:**

1. **Group discussion on resilience strategies in VET settings**
2. **Storytelling activities to express experiences creatively**
3. **Creating personalised action plans**

### **Step 1: Group discussion on resilience strategies in VET settings**

This step is about discussing different resilience strategies that VET professionals can adopt in a class setting to promote resilience and mental well-being among refugees. Trainers can either have the discussion as a large group or divide the participants into small groups to discuss various resilience strategies. The focus should be on techniques that can be easily implemented in VET settings and participants are expected to share insights and practical approaches to foster resilience among refugees. Flipcharts, markers for notetaking during discussions, reflection journals or notepads can be used.

Most used **resilience strategies in VET settings** are as follows (Heather Savazzi, 2018; Sleijpen M., Mooren T, et al, 2017; Short K, Crooks C, et al, n.d.):

### **1. Fostering social connections**

Encourage social networks among refugees through group activities, peer mentoring, and support groups. Social support boosts resilience by providing emotional backing, practical help, and belonging. A community within the VET setting reduces isolation and aids integration.

### **2. Providing flexible learning schedules**

Implement flexible learning schedules to accommodate refugees' varying needs and personal circumstances, such as family responsibilities, legal issues, or health concerns. This approach reduces stress and helps them balance studies with other life aspects, fostering a supportive and adaptable learning environment.

### **3. Offering psychological support services**

Provide psychological support services, such as counselling and therapy, to help refugees process trauma and develop coping mechanisms. Making these services readily available in VET settings can significantly boost refugees' mental well-being and resilience, enabling better engagement in their education and personal development.

### **4. Incorporating cultural sensitivity training**

Conduct cultural sensitivity training for staff and students to create an inclusive and respectful environment. Understanding refugees' cultural backgrounds helps prevent misunderstandings and discrimination, fostering a safer and more supportive learning space and boosting refugees' confidence and security in the VET setting.

### **5. Encouraging physical activities**

Incorporate physical activities and sports into the VET curriculum to reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance mental health. These activities can significantly build resilience and improve the mental well-being of refugees.

### **6. Facilitating language and communication skills**

Provide language and communication skills training to help refugees overcome language barriers and engage better with the VET curriculum and peers. Effective communication is crucial for building relationships, accessing resources, and succeeding in education. Improved language skills boost refugees' confidence and ability to navigate their new environment.

### **7. Promoting self-care and mindfulness practices**

Integrate self-care and mindfulness practices like meditation, yoga, and journaling into the VET daily routine. These activities help refugees manage stress, stay grounded, and develop a positive mindset, supporting their mental health and resilience. They can be part of the curriculum or optional sessions.

### **8. Providing access to educational resources**

Ensure that refugees have access to a wide range of educational resources, including textbooks, online materials, and tutoring. Access to these resources can help bridge educational gaps and provide the support needed to succeed academically. Empowering refugees with the tools they need can enhance their sense of control and competence, contributing to their overall resilience.

### **Key areas for reflection**

1. What specific resilience strategies can VET professionals implement in a class setting to support the mental well-being of refugees, and how can these be integrated into the existing curriculum?
2. How can VET professionals create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment that promotes resilience and mental well-being for refugees?
3. What role do VET professionals play in identifying and addressing the unique mental health needs of refugee students, and what resources or training might be needed to enhance their effectiveness in this role?

## **Step 2: Storytelling activities to express experiences creatively**

In this step, participants should be encouraged to share their own experiences when handling refugee trauma and resilience strategies in a VET setting through storytelling. For this, they can use different methods such as writing, drawing, or verbal narratives. The main goal is to promote emotional expression and understanding, fostering empathy and connection among participants. This sharing can be done in the same group setting as step 1.

**Storytelling** is the art of conveying events and messages through words, images, and sounds, often with creative elements. It serves to entertain, educate, and preserve cultural heritage, connecting people and fostering empathy. Storytelling takes various forms, from oral traditions to digital media, allowing for the expression of creativity and the sharing of complex ideas in an accessible way.

## **Step 3: Creating personalised action plans**

In this step, each participant should develop a personalised action plan outlining specific steps they will take to implement resilience strategies in their VET settings. This plan should include goals, timelines, and measurable outcomes. The goal is to ensure that VET professionals leave the activity with a clear, actionable plan tailored to their unique context, enabling them to immediately apply what they have learned.

### **Key guiding questions**

1. What specific goals do I aim to achieve with this action plan, and how do they align with the needs and well-being of my refugee students?
2. What resources, training, and support systems are necessary to implement the strategies outlined in my action plan in an effective way?
3. How will I measure the success of my action plan, and what metrics or indicators will I use to assess progress and make the necessary adjustments?

## **Recommendation for trainers**

Given the challenges on trauma and resilience, some recommendations for VET professionals working with refugees:

- Integrate activities like meditation, yoga, and journaling into the curriculum to help refugees manage stress and develop a positive mindset.
- Encourage resilience by providing opportunities for refugees to build their coping skills through structured activities and discussions.
- Foster a class culture of inclusivity and support, ensuring all students feel valued and respected.
- Provide additional sessions focused on mental health and well-being to give refugees extra support as needed.



- Continuously improve your understanding of the cultural backgrounds and experiences of refugee students to better meet their needs.
- Apply trauma-informed teaching methods to create a safe and supportive learning environment for refugees to may have experienced significant trauma.
- Develop trust with refugee students through consistent, empathetic interactions and support.
- Ensure refugees have access to necessary resources, such as mental health services, language support, and community integration programmes.
- Facilitate peer support groups where refugees can share experiences and offer mutual support in a safe setting.
- Regularly assess the effectiveness of your strategies and adjust based on feedback and observed outcomes to continuously improve support for refugee students.

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## Module 2 - Culturally Sensitive and Cultural Competence

### Objective

To equip VET professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to understand, respect, and effectively interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This module aims to promote cultural awareness and competence, enabling trainers to create inclusive learning environments for refugee learners.

### Activities

#### Activity 1#: Intercultural Communication

**Goal:** to help VET professionals improve how they talk and listen in settings with people from different cultural backgrounds.

**Description:** this activity focuses on understanding and practicing communication styles that are common in various cultures. Participants will learn about high-context and low-context communication and try out these styles through role-playing exercises. The goal is to help them communicate more effectively with refugee learners who may have different ways of sharing and interpreting information.

#### Steps:

1. **Understanding Communication Styles**
2. **Step 2: Role-Playing Different Scenarios**
3. **Group discussion and reflective questions**

#### Step 1: Understanding Communication Styles

The workshop starts with a simple explanation of high-context and low-context communication styles. High-context communication relies a lot on body language, tone of voice, and could mean more in fewer words. It's common in many Asian and Middle Eastern cultures. Low-context communication is straightforward and direct, relying less on context and more on explicit words, common in Western countries like the USA and Germany.

#### Examples:

- For high-context communication a person might say, "It's getting cold," which means they want to close the window without asking directly.
- For low-context communication someone will directly say, "Please close the window."

#### Step 2: Role-Playing Different Scenarios

Participants engage in role-playing to practice adapting their communication based on the styles discussed. Here are 3 potential scenarios:

#### Scenario 1: Team Meeting Misunderstanding

During a team meeting, a refugee team member says, "This timeline seems tight." They come from a high-context culture where direct criticism is avoided. The team leader from a low-context culture misunderstands this as a simple observation rather than a concern about the feasibility of the timeline.

### Scenario 2: Instruction Clarity in Class

VET teacher uses special terms to describe a new tool, which confuses a student from a culture where it's rude to ask too many questions (high context). The student remains confused and doesn't ask for help.

### Scenario 3: Feedback Session

VET trainer from high-context culture tries to give gentle hints on how to improve to a learner who expects direct comments (low-context communication). The employee learner misses the trainers' subtle hints and thinks everything is fine.

### Step 3: Group Discussion and reflective questions

- After each role-playing exercise, the group comes together to discuss the interaction:
- Were there any misunderstandings due to cultural communication differences?
- What alternative approaches could better align with different cultural expectations?
- How might your understanding of high-context and low-context communication change the way you interact with colleagues and students from different cultures?
- Can you think of a recent interaction where recognizing these communication styles could have improved the outcome?
- What are some steps you can take to ensure your communication is clear and considerate of various cultural backgrounds?

### Activity 2#: Cultural Quiz Challenge

**Goal:** to increase knowledge and awareness about the diverse cultures of refugee populations among VET professionals through an interactive quiz format.

**Description:** this activity involves a fun and competitive quiz that challenges VET professionals to answer questions related to the traditions, customs, history, and societal norms of various cultures represented by refugees they might work with. The quiz is designed to be both educational and engaging, promoting learning through competition and discussion.

#### Steps

1. **Introduction**
2. **Quiz Questions**
3. **Discussion and reflection**

#### Step 1: Introduction

Begin by explaining the purpose of the quiz—to test and expand participants' knowledge of the cultures relevant to the refugee populations they work with

#### Step 2: Quiz Questions

Present a set of questions related to cultural practices, customs, and norms in these countries. Mix multiple-choice, true/false, and open-ended questions to create an engaging and varied challenge.

1. In many Middle Eastern cultures, which is a common greeting between men?

- a) Shaking hands firmly
- b) A kiss on the cheek
- c) A pat on the back
- d) Placing a hand on the heart

Correct Answer: D) Placing a hand on the heart

2. What role does education play for young refugee children from Syria and Iraq in integrating into the school system?"

Correct Answer: Education plays a crucial role in helping young refugee children integrate. School provides a structured environment where children can learn the local language, make friends, and understand the new culture. However, they may face challenges such as language barriers, trauma from conflict, and cultural differences in the classroom.

3. In which country is it customary to eat with your hands?

- A) Italy
- B) Russia
- C) Ethiopia
- D) Germany

Correct Answer: C) Ethiopia

4. What colour is traditionally considered unlucky in many East Asian cultures?

- a) Red
- b) Black
- c) White
- d) Green

Correct Answer: C) White

5. Describe the challenges that Afghan refugee women might face when adjusting to gender norms in countries like Germany and Austria.

Correct Answer: Afghan refugee women may face challenges adjusting to more liberal gender norms, such as increased public presence and interaction with men, in countries like Germany and Austria. They may encounter cultural barriers related to dress codes, employment, and social expectations, which differ from traditional Afghan practices. Balancing these expectations with their own values and religious beliefs can create tension during the integration process.

6. It is common in Brazilian culture to arrive an hour late to a social gathering.

- True
- False

Correct Answer: True

7. Explain why it is considered respectful to avoid direct eye contact in some Middle Eastern cultures.

Correct Answer: In some Middle Eastern cultures, avoiding direct eye contact, especially between different genders, is seen as a sign of respect and modesty. It helps maintain personal boundaries and shows deference to social hierarchies.

8. What role do elders play in decision-making in traditional African societies?

Correct Answer: In many traditional African societies, elders are highly respected and play a crucial role in community decision-making. Their wisdom and experience are valued, and they often mediate conflicts and make key decisions about communal matters, reflecting the community's reverence for age and experience.

9. Which food is traditionally eaten during Ramadan, especially by refugees from the Middle East and North Africa?"

- a) Bread and cheese
- b) Rice pudding
- c) Dates
- d) Lamb stew

Correct Answer: C) Dates

10. What is a common tradition among Syrian refugees in Germany when it comes to family gatherings?"

- a) Large family meals with extended family members
- b) Isolating from family due to migration
- c) Avoiding social gatherings
- d) Eating meals alone

Correct Answer: A) Large family meals with extended family members

11. Refugees from Afghanistan often practice Islam, and it is customary to pray five times a day.

- True
- False

Correct Answer: True

12. Explain why it is important for refugee families from Syria or Iraq to maintain close family ties, even after relocating to Germany or Austria.

Correct Answer: Family is central to the cultural values of refugees from Syria and Iraq. Close family ties offer emotional support, help preserve traditions and assist in navigating the challenges of integrating into a new country. Maintaining these connections can be crucial for psychological well-being and stability during the resettlement process.

### Step 3: Discussion and reflection

After the quiz, discuss key insights and misconceptions that arose during the activity. Encourage participants to share any additional knowledge or experiences they may have about the cultural topics covered.

Conclude the activity by asking reflective questions such as:

- How can these cultural insights help you in your interactions with refugees from these countries?
- What new cultural understandings did you gain from the quiz?

## Recommendations for trainers

Given the challenges on cultural sensibility and cultural competence, some recommendations for VET professionals working with refugees:

- Be mindful of high-context and low-context communication differences. Adjust communication to ensure clarity, especially with learners from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Regularly incorporate role-playing to practice handling real-world cultural misunderstandings. Focus on scenarios common in training environments.

- Use interactive quizzes to build cultural knowledge. This method encourages learning in a relaxed, engaging way while improving awareness of refugee cultures.
- Encourage reflection and discussion after activities to deepen understanding. Use it as an opportunity for trainers to share insights and apply new cultural knowledge.
- Use real-world scenarios to highlight specific challenges faced by refugees, such as gender roles or family dynamics, and discuss how to navigate these in training settings.

## Module 3 - Understanding Refugee Experience

### Objective

To equip VET professionals with a comprehensive understanding of the diverse challenges that refugees face due to displacement and cultural transitions. This module aims to foster empathy and insight into the refugee experience, enhancing the trainers' ability to provide supportive, culturally sensitive, and inclusive vocational education.

### Activities

#### Activity 1#: Cultural Perspectives and Positionality Workshop

##### Goals:

- The VET trainer gain ideas of different forms of cultural norms, customs, and inequality of the refugee experiences
- The trainers reflect on their own involvement in it (unsettle normality)

**Description:** this exercise aims to make participants think about different cultural backgrounds and positions in society. The Cultural backgrounds, customs and communication styles define how trainers could work with the refugee communities. The positions frame the range of opportunities in society, work and school very differently. By taking these positions in a role play, the trainers can deepen their knowledge and empathy for subjects with different cultural backgrounds, which may also include some of their students or trainees. This exercise also aims to deepen the reflection of their own positionality. The idea of positionality means the position a person has in different cultures and power structures.

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Material:** Cards and list of questions

##### Steps

1. Preparation
2. Procedure
3. Reflection

##### Step 1: Preparation

Space will be required to walk through the room.

- The list of questions/statements must be prepared.

**Possibility 1:** Take the statements from the list in the appendix.

**Possibility 2:** Take the statements as inspirations to create own statements, which possibly match the group.

- The role cards must be prepared.

**Possibility 1:** Take the template cards from the appendix.

**Possibility 2:** The trainers create them matching to the group they are working with.



## Step 2: Procedure

The participants line up next to each other. Everyone receives a role card. In the next three minutes, the participants adjust to their roles. They can ask the team if something is not clear to them about the role.

The moderators announce that they will ask a series of questions. After each question, all participants should consider if – in their role – they can answer **yes** to the question. Then they can take a large step forward. If they answer **no** they remain in their position. Here, the purpose is to use subjective assessment, which is more important than knowledge and factual accuracy.

The moderators read the questions aloud. For the moderators, it is important to keep asking the players why they took a step forward or why they stopped. Especially with large groups, it is not always possible to ask everyone after every step as that would take too long. As a guide, average of three people should be asked after each step. By the fourth step, all participants should have had a turn and, if they are speaking for the first time, should also say what role they are playing.

A computer specialist, Indian nationality, 33 years, single, male.	A 42-year-old single Filipino nurse, female.	A 19-year-old Turkish high school graduate with a Muslim background, male.
A semi-skilled precision mechanic, she says of herself that she has a Turkish mentality, 56 years, married, 4 children.	A 39-year-old semi-skilled metalworker, trained psychologist, emigrant from Kazakhstan, male.	A 30-year-old skilled worker, temporary employment contract (18 months), single, female.
An 18-year-old commercial student with good grades, female.	19-year-old carpentry trainee, living on the countryside with her parents, engaged.	A 26-year-old Ghanaian asylum seeker, no residence permit, single, male.
A 45-year-old master electrician, mother of 2 children, married.	A 20-year-old Telekom trainee, is not taken on after his training.	A 28-year-old non-working Thai wife of a non-foreign bus driver.
A 35-year-old cleaner, Iranian refugee, male, single.	A 19-year-old punk, casually working in a bar, single, male.	A 32-year-old homeless and unemployed tiler, male.
A 35-year-old single, nurse.	A 46-year-old Kurdish owner of a kebab restaurant, male.	A 17-year-old trainee in communications electronics, of Kurdish origin, single, gay, female.
A 38-year-old lesbian mother of 2 children, saleswoman.	A 17-year-old high school graduate, single, is in a wheelchair, female.	A severely disabled gatekeeper in a wheelchair, 51 years old, single, male.
A 40-year-old Polish seasonal worker, married, female.	A 22-year-old electrician with a gambling addiction, male.	An 18-year-old Moroccan unskilled worker with a secondary school diploma, single, male.
A 20-year-old pregnant woman on maternity leave, HIV-positive, single.	30-year-old woman with autism, looking for training or qualification, single, living alone.	A 26-year-old Ukrainian caretaker, single mother of 1 child.

50-year-old managing director of a VET Centre, married, father of 3 children, house owner.	26-year-old trans person, 6 years after transition, single, hairdresser, wants to be addressed with non-binary pronouns	A 20-year-old waiter, seasonal worker, male, single.
34-year-old business leader from a wealthy family and fraternity background, male.	30-year-old Jewish woman, living with a catholic man, working as bus driver.	58-year-old single man, long term unemployed.
A 27-year-old male, one parent from Ghana, bilingual, engineer.	45-year-old woman, high qualified, with 2 children, divorced, unemployed.	17-year-old NEET, living in a assisted community, male
A 19-year-old son of a politician, cocaine addict.	A 75-year-old pensioner, widow.	40-year-old ex-prisoner with alimonies to pay.
A 51-year-old catholic vicar	40-year-old VET trainer, gay married, one daughter,	A 40-year-old black father of 2 children, teacher, divorced.

### Step 3: Reflection

After the last question, all participants stay in place in their role for the evaluation:

- How did you feel in your role?
- What is it like to be the first to reach the finish line?
- What is it like to always not get ahead?
- What is it like to notice that your peers don't move forward?
- What questions stuck out in your mind the most?
- By which questions did you move forward, or by which did you have to remain?

### Activity 2#: Cultural Artifact Exchange

**Goal:** to facilitate a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures through the exchange and discussion of cultural artifacts from other cultures or specifically from refugee communities that participants work with.

**Description:** this activity encourages participants to bring an item or share a story about a cultural artifact from a culture other than their own or from a refugee community they are familiar with. By sharing and exploring these artifacts, participants engage in meaningful discussions about cultural diversity, learn about the significance of various cultural practices, and develop a greater empathy for the experiences of refugees.

#### Steps:

1. Preparation
2. Artifact Presentation
3. Group discussion
4. Reflective questions

#### Step 1: Preparation

Participants are asked to bring an artifact that represents a significant aspect of a culture different from their own, ideally focusing on the cultures of refugee populations they may interact with in their professional roles. This could be an item they own, one they have seen, or a cultural practice they have learned about.

**Examples of Artifacts:**

- An item of clothing, such as a scarf or hat, that is traditional to a specific refugee community.
- A traditional musical instrument from a refugee's native country.
- A recipe or spice that is central to a refugee group's cuisine.

**For example:**

- A participant brings a traditional Moroccan tea set, explaining the ritual of tea making in Morocco which is a significant gesture of hospitality and friendship. They discuss how this ritual is a time for family gatherings and sharing stories, providing a sense of community and belonging.
- Another brings a collection of Pysanky, which are Ukrainian Easter eggs. Decorated with traditional folk designs using a wax-resist method, these eggs are a symbol of renewal, life, and hope. The participant shares how creating Pysanky is a meditative practice and a proud cultural tradition, often taught from mother to daughter.

**Step 2: Artifact Presentation**

Each participant presents their artifact to the group. They should explain what the artifact is, its cultural significance, and any personal or second-hand stories associated with it. Participants should speak about how the artifact is used in cultural rituals or everyday life. If applicable, participants can demonstrate the use of the item or prepare a small sample if it's a food item.

**Step 3: Group Discussion**

- Discuss how these artifacts help to understand the lives and challenges of refugees from those cultures.
- Examine the role of cultural sensitivity in educational and social interactions with refugees.

**Step 4: Reflection:**

- How might this understanding of diverse cultural artifacts influence your approach to teaching or interacting with refugees?
- What impact do you think a deeper cultural understanding could have on your ability to support refugee learners?

**Activity 3#: Trauma Informed Approaches in Vocational Training**

**Goal:** to enhance VET professionals' understanding of trauma and its impact on refugee learners, equipping them to apply trauma-informed practices in their educational settings.

**Description:** this activity centres on an animated video, developed within NewFuture, exploring trauma and traumatic experiences, particularly in the context of refugees. It aims to deepen participants' awareness of trauma's effects and foster effective strategies for creating a supportive learning environment.

**Steps:**

1. **Video Presentation**
2. **Insights and Strategy Development**
3. **Reflective questions**

### **Step 1: Video Presentation**

The session starts with a screening of the animated video titled "Trauma and Traumatic Experience", developed within NewFuture. The video details the psychological impacts of trauma, common symptoms, and how these experiences might affect refugees' behaviour and learning capabilities.

### **Step 2: Insights and Strategy Development**

- After viewing the video, facilitate a discussion to gather participants' initial reactions and insights. Focus on how the content relates to their experiences and roles as VET professionals.
- Encourage participants to think about practical ways to adapt their teaching methods to be more sensitive to the needs of traumatized learners, such as adjusting classroom settings, modifying teaching styles, and implementing supportive communication techniques.

### **Step 3: Reflective Questions**

- How can the strategies developed today be implemented in your current teaching environment?
- What are some potential challenges in applying these strategies, and how might you overcome them?
- How might understanding trauma change your approach to teaching and interacting with all learners, not just refugees?

## **Recommendations for trainers**

Given the challenges on understanding refugee experience, some recommendations for VET professionals working with refugees:

- Continuously learn about the cultural backgrounds of refugee learners and actively participate in workshops to enhance cultural empathy.
- Recognize trauma signs in refugee learners and adapt your teaching to create a supportive and accommodating classroom environment.
- Facilitate activities that promote cultural understanding, like sharing cultural artifacts, to build an inclusive learning community.
- Cultivate empathy through reflective practices and discussions that help staff understand refugee experiences better.
- Pursue ongoing education in cultural competence and trauma-informed care and share new strategies with colleagues.

## Module 4 - Psychological First Aid for VET Professionals

### Objective

Equip VET trainers with essential skills and knowledge to provide first-line psychological support to refugees who may be experiencing distress or trauma, using PFA principles adapted to vocational education settings.

### Activities

#### Activity 1#: PFA in Action - Scenario-Based Quiz

**Description:** this activity consists of a scenario-based quiz designed to test and reinforce participants' understanding of PFA principles in practical VET settings. Each question presents a hypothetical situation commonly encountered by VET professionals when providing support to refugees. Participants will be asked to choose the best course of action from multiple-choice options, focusing on empathetic listening, cultural sensitivity, and non-verbal communication.

#### Steps:

- **Step 1: Quiz Introduction:**
- **Step 2: Presentation of Scenarios and Quiz Questions**
- **Step 3: Discussion and Reflection**

#### Step 1: Quiz Introduction:

Begin by explaining the objectives of the quiz and how it will be conducted. Assure participants that the purpose is to enhance learning, not to test them under pressure.

Emphasize that the scenarios are based on common situations they might encounter in their vocational roles and that the quiz is a tool for self-reflection and improvement.

#### Step 2: Presentation of Scenarios and Quiz Questions

Present each scenario clearly, either via a projected screen or distributed handouts. Allow participants time to read through each scenario and think about their answers before responding.

The quiz includes the following scenarios:

1. **Empathetic Listening Scenario:** You work with a refugee who is hesitant to speak about their experiences. They pause often and search for the right words. How do you proceed?
  - a) Prompt them to continue with questions about their experiences.
  - b) Sit quietly, maintain eye contact, and wait for them to continue when they're ready.
  - c) Change the subject to something less sensitive.

**Correct Answer:** B) Sit quietly, maintain eye contact, and wait for them to continue when they're ready

2. **Cultural Sensitivity Scenario:** A refugee from a culture that values indirect communication is showing signs of distress but minimizes their feelings when asked directly. What approach respects their cultural background while addressing their distress?

- a) Continue asking direct questions about their feelings.
- b) Use indirect questions and observe non-verbal cues for signs of distress.
- c) Avoid discussing feelings to prevent discomfort.

**Correct Answer:** B) Use indirect questions and observe non-verbal cues for signs of distress.

3. **Non-Verbal Communication Scenario:** You notice a refugee making minimal eye contact and folding their arms tightly across chest. How might you interpret and respond?

- a) They are disinterested in the session. Continue without addressing it.
- b) They may be feeling defensive/uncomfortable. Use open body language to convey safety.
- c) They are simply cold. Offer to adjust the room temperature.

**Correct Answer:** B) They may be feeling defensive or uncomfortable. Use open body language to convey safety

### Step 3: Discussion and Reflection

- After each question, discuss the correct answer and why it is the best response. Facilitate a discussion that allows participants to share their thoughts and ask questions.
- Encourage participants to relate the scenarios to their own experiences and how they might handle similar situations in their training environments.
- Conclude the activity with a reflective discussion on what participants have learned and how they feel they can apply these insights in their vocational settings.

### Activity 2#: Scenario Building for PFA Application

**Goal:** enable VET trainers to apply PFA effectively in scenarios that involve language barriers and cultural differences, enhancing the well-being and integration of refugee students.

**Description:** this activity engages trainers in creating detailed scenarios that they are likely to encounter in their specific vocational fields. By incorporating elements of PFA, trainers will develop strategies to support refugees in overcoming challenges related to trauma, stress, and cultural integration.

#### Steps:

1. **Presentation on Psychological First Aid**
2. **Scenario Distribution and Development**
3. **Developing PFA Strategies**
4. **Reflective questions**

#### Step 1. Presentation on Psychological First Aid:

Begin the session by clarifying what PFA is and its critical role in vocational education settings, especially when working with refugees who might face various stressors and trauma. Emphasize that PFA is not about solving all problems but providing immediate support and stabilization.

#### Key Principles of PFA:

- Ensure that individuals feel physically and emotionally safe. Explain how safety can be fostered in a vocational training environment.
- Help individuals feel calm. Discuss techniques such as deep breathing or structured breaks that trainers can employ during stressful training sessions.
- Enhance the individuals' ability to help themselves and their community. Share strategies to empower students, like peer support or skill recognition.
- Provide information about available support networks and encourage social connections sense of hope and optimism for the future, vital for resilience and recovery.

### Understanding PFA Components:

- Stress the importance of empathetic listening to understand the needs and emotions of students without judgment. Demonstrate how active listening can be practiced in class.
- Introduce basic methods to help students regain emotional balance during a crisis, such as grounding techniques or simple mindfulness exercises tailored to the vocational context.
- Discuss how to provide clear, practical information to students about coping strategies and available resources, using language that is easy to understand and culturally appropriate.

### Step 2: Scenario Development and PFA Application

Engage participants in identifying and understanding common challenges faced by refugee learners through interactive scenario development.

Begin by explaining that trainers will work on basic scenarios that simulate common misunderstandings. Provide possible 3 examples but the trainers are free to offer their own scenarios, based on their realities and needs. The goal is to develop these scenarios by adding complexities, more aspects and layers that reflect the emotional and psychological impacts.

#### Process

1. Distribute basic scenarios to each group, each depicting a typical challenge in a VET context.

#### Scenario examples

- **Scenario 1: Misunderstanding in Tool Usage**

A refugee learner in a carpentry workshop uses the wrong saw due to confusion over similar sounding tool names, leading to improper cuts and safety risks.

- **Scenario 2: Cultural Sensitivity in Hospitality Training**

A refugee learner is uncomfortable preparing cocktails for a class event due to their religious beliefs against handling alcohol.

- **Scenario 3: Recipe Misinterpretation in Culinary Arts**

A culinary instructor uses the term "julienne" while demonstrating vegetable cutting techniques. A refugee learner misunderstands and cuts vegetables incorrectly, impacting the dish's preparation and their confidence.

2. Based on the selected scenario Instruct trainers to add complexities and more aspects to the scenario, focusing on emotional, cultural, and communicative layers, i.e., **facilitate storytelling where each participant adds an element to complicate the scenario further, e.g. one trainer may add the following aspect on the**
  - Scenario 1: The learner feels anxious and embarrassed about the mistake and is reluctant to ask for further clarification, fearing further mistakes or criticism.
  - Scenario 2: The learner's discomfort is noticed by peers, leading to misunderstandings and social withdrawal.
  - Scenario 3: Continued misunderstandings about culinary terms exacerbate the learner's stress and isolation from classmates.

### Step 3: Developing PFA Strategies

Equip participants with practical PFA tools and approaches to address the challenges identified in the developed scenarios, emphasizing immediate support and stabilization. VET trainers review their

expanded scenario, highlighting key challenges faced by the refugee learner, such as emotional distress, misunderstandings due to language barriers, and cultural sensitivities.

The VET professionals brainstorm PFA strategies that could effectively address the identified needs:

- Listening Actively.
- Comforting, which could include simple gestures of understanding, creating a reassuring environment, or using calming techniques.
- Offering information (e.g., clarifying instructions, providing written summaries).
- Helping the learner connect with additional supports, whether within the training setting or external services.
- Practical help that can be provided to ease the learner's situation.

#### **Step 4: Reflective Questions**

- What strategies worked well?
- What could be improved to provide better support to refugee students?

#### **Activity 3#: Reflection through Art: Integrating PFA into Vocational Training**

**Goal:** to enable VET professionals to internalize and express their understanding of PFA concepts through creative activities, enhancing their ability to conduct supportive and inclusive vocational training sessions for refugees.

**Description:** this activity uses art as a medium for VET professionals to reflect on the PFA training they have received. By engaging in artistic expressions such as drawing, painting, or crafting, participants can explore their feelings about the training, express their takeaways, and plan how to apply these insights in their vocational education practices. The activity is designed to be accessible and valuable even for those without prior knowledge of psychology or education theories, focusing instead on practical expressions of learned concepts.

#### **Steps:**

- 1. Artistic Expression**
- 2. Expression of PFA Principles**
- 3. Sharing and Reflecting**
- 4. Reflective Questions**

#### **Step 1: Artistic Expression**

Participants are provided with art supplies and encouraged to create something that represents what they've learned about PFA. For example, a cook might draw a kitchen where each tool is labelled with an emotion or PFA principle, illustrating how they can create a supportive environment for refugee learners. A carpenter might build a small model of a welcoming classroom setting.

This step aims to facilitate personal expression and emotional processing, allowing participants to explore and externalize their feelings about the training through art.

#### **Step 2: Expression of PFA Principles**

As they create, participants think about specific PFA principles such as safety, listening, or empathy. They are encouraged to envision how these principles can be practically applied within their specific vocational training areas. For instance, a hairdresser might sketch a salon setup that allows for private conversations, showing respect for privacy and fostering emotional safety.



Before starting, briefly recap the key PFA principles. Provide examples of how these might be represented visually or symbolically. For example:

- Safety through symbols like shields, safe spaces, or warm colours.
- Listening by showing ears, sound waves, or dialog bubbles.
- Understanding by depicting bridges, puzzles with pieces fitting together, or hands shaking.
- Comfort through images of soothing natural scenes, or figures giving a comforting gesture.
- Empowerment by images of raised hands, tools, or individuals standing tall and confident.

### **Step 3: Sharing and Reflecting**

Once the artworks are completed, facilitate a session where participants can share their work with the group. Encourage them to discuss what they've depicted and how it relates to PFA. Finally, participants are asked to think about and note down one or two specific ways they can apply PFA principles in their next training session with refugees. For example, a mechanic might plan to start each class with a brief check-in to gauge learners' comfort levels and address any concerns, thus applying the PFA principle of ensuring emotional safety.

### **Step 4: Reflective Questions**

- What aspect of PFA does your artwork represent?
- How does this art help you understand or plan to apply PFA in your vocational role?

## **Recommendations for trainers**

Given the challenges on psychological first aid, some recommendations for VET professionals working with refugees:

- Use active listening and clear communication to ensure learners feel safe and supported in all training sessions.
- Adapt PFA strategies to fit your vocational setting, like providing clear instructions to overcome language barriers.
- Respect cultural differences in expressing distress. Use indirect questions and observe non-verbal cues for better understanding.
- Incorporate art or storytelling to help trainers internalize and apply PFA concepts in practical ways.
- Regularly develop scenarios to practice applying PFA, focusing on realistic challenges like stress or cultural misunderstandings.
- Encourage self-reliance and peer support, providing practical coping strategies to help refugee learners succeed.

## Module 5 - Trauma-Informed Care and Teaching Techniques

### Objective

Please describe 3-5 activities/exercises per module that are related to the specific guidance and key principles mentioned in the training curriculum. The activities focus on the promoting and support of mental wellbeing of refugees and can be applied in group or individual settings. You can also develop both variations for group work or individual settings.

### Activities

#### Activity 1#: Introducing the neurobiology of trauma

**Goal:** To enhance participants' understanding of how trauma affects cognitive and emotional functioning through the lens of neurobiology.

#### Steps:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Group Discussion: The Brain's Response to Trauma**
3. **Sharing Insights**
4. **Q&A Session: Exploring the Neurobiology of Trauma**
5. **Conclusion and Reflection**

#### Step 1: Introduction

- Begin with a brief overview of the session's objectives. Explain the significance of understanding the neurobiological underpinnings of trauma and how it can affect cognitive and emotional functioning.
- Introduce key concepts such as the brain's stress response, the role of the amygdala, hippocampus, and prefrontal cortex, and how trauma can lead to dysregulation in these areas.

#### Step 2: Group Discussion: The Brain's Response to Trauma

- Divide participants into small groups of 4-5 members.
- Each group will discuss the following questions:
  - a) What are some common cognitive and emotional symptoms experienced by individuals who have undergone trauma?
  - b) How do you think trauma affects the brain's ability to process emotions and make decisions?
  - c) In what ways might trauma impact learning and memory?
- Encourage participants to draw on both personal knowledge and any prior readings or experiences.

#### Step 3: Sharing Insights

- After the discussion, have each group share their key insights with the larger group.
- Use a flipchart or whiteboard to note down common themes and important points raised during the discussions.

#### **Step 4: Q&A Session: Exploring the Neurobiology of Trauma**

- Open the floor for a Q&A session where participants can ask questions about the neurobiological aspects of trauma.
- Encourage questions related to how trauma affects brain structures, neurochemical changes, and the implications for therapy and recovery.
- If needed, provide additional information or clarify concepts using visual aids or handouts.

#### **Step 5: Conclusion and Reflection**

- Summarize the key takeaways from the session, highlighting the importance of understanding trauma's impact on the brain for effective treatment and support.
- Encourage participants to reflect on how this knowledge might inform their professional practice or personal lives.
- End with a brief discussion on the importance of trauma-informed approaches in various settings.

#### **Activity 2#: Safety and trust**

**Goal:** To deepen participants' understanding of how to create a supportive learning environment by building safety and trust. Through discussions and practical exercises, participants will explore strategies for fostering a sense of security and trust in their own educational or training settings.

#### **Duration:**

60 minutes

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Markers
- Scenario cards (prepared in advance)
- Handouts summarizing key points from the provided text (optional)

#### **Steps:**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Group Discussion: Creating a Safe and Trusting Environment**
- 3. Scenario-Based Exercise: Addressing Safety and Trust**
- 4. Q&A and Reflection**
- 5. Follow-up**

#### **Step 1: Introduction**

- Begin with a brief overview of the importance of safety and trust in a learning environment. Emphasize how these elements are crucial for creating a space where learners can thrive, particularly in a trauma-informed context.
- Highlight key concepts from the text, such as the role of consistent routines, respectful interactions, and cultural sensitivity in fostering safety and trust.

## Step 2: Group Discussion: Creating a Safe and Trusting Environment

- Divide participants into small groups of 4-5 members.
- Provide each group with the following discussion questions:
  1. What are some practical ways to establish a sense of safety in a learning environment?
  2. How can educators build and maintain trust with their learners?
  3. How does understanding trauma and its effects influence the way educators interact with learners?
- Encourage participants to share experiences or ideas and to think about how they can implement these strategies in their own settings.

## Step 3: Scenario-Based Exercise: Addressing Safety and Trust

- Prepare a set of scenario cards that depict different challenges related to safety and trust in a learning environment (e.g., a learner who frequently disrupts the class due to anxiety, a student who withdraws when asked to participate in group activities, etc.).
- Instruct each group to pick a scenario card and discuss how they would address the situation to enhance safety and trust. They should consider the strategies discussed earlier and incorporate trauma-informed practices.
- After 10 minutes, have each group present their scenario and proposed solutions to the larger group.

### Scenario Cards examples:

#### Scenario Card 1: The Anxious Learner

You have a learner in your class who often seems anxious and fidgets constantly during lessons. This learner frequently asks to leave the classroom, citing vague reasons like needing fresh air or feeling unwell. Other learners are noticing and make comments, which seems to heighten the anxious learner's discomfort.

#### Discussion Questions:

- How would you address this learner's anxiety while maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for everyone?
- What strategies could you implement to help this learner feel more comfortable and secure in the classroom?
- How might trauma be a factor in this learner's behaviour, and how can you be sensitive to this?

#### Scenario Card 2: The Disruptive Adult Learner (Refugee Context)

You have an adult learner in your class who is a refugee. This learner often disrupts sessions by interrupting others, speaking out of turn, and sometimes challenging your instructions. Despite your attempts to manage the behaviour, the disruptions continue, creating tension in the group. You are aware that this learner has experienced significant trauma and loss in their home country and is struggling to adapt to their new environment.

#### Discussion Questions:

- How would you approach this learner to understand the underlying causes of their disruptive behaviour?
- What strategies could you implement to create a safe and supportive learning environment for this learner and the rest of the group?
- How can you use trauma-informed practices to address the needs of this learner while maintaining respect and inclusion for all participants?

### **Scenario Card 3: The Withdrawn Learner**

You notice that one of your learners, who was previously engaged and participative, has become increasingly withdrawn. They no longer contribute to discussions, avoid eye contact, and seem disconnected from the learning process. Attempts to engage them in conversation are met with minimal responses.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- How would you approach this learner to understand what might be causing this change in behaviour?
- What steps can you take to create a supportive environment that encourages this learner to re-engage?
- Consider the possibility of trauma—how might this influence your approach?

### **Scenario Card 4: The Overwhelmed Learner**

A student in your class has been struggling to keep up with assignments and seems increasingly overwhelmed. They've missed several deadlines and have started to avoid class, often giving vague excuses. When they do attend, they appear stressed and exhausted.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- How can you approach this learner to offer support and reduce their stress?
- What strategies can you implement to create a more manageable workload and a sense of safety for this learner?
- How might this situation be handled differently with a trauma-informed approach?

### **Step 4: Q&A and Reflection**

- Open the floor for questions and reflections on the scenarios and the overall discussion.
- Encourage participants to think about how they can apply these insights in their professional practice.
- If time permits, ask participants to share any personal strategies they use to build safety and trust in their learning environments.

### **Step 5: Conclusion**

- Summarize the key points discussed during the session, emphasizing the importance of a safe and trusting environment for effective learning, especially for individuals who have experienced trauma.
- Provide participants with any handouts that summarize the strategies discussed and suggest additional resources for further reading on trauma-informed educational practices.

## Step 6: Follow-Up

Encourage participants to reflect on the session and to consider implementing one or two new strategies in their own practice. Offer to reconvene in a future session to discuss their experiences and any challenges they encountered in building safety and trust.

### Activity 2#: Respecting personal choice - cognitive and art technics

**Goal:** two distinct art therapy activities are presented in this session to accommodate individual preferences and needs, allowing participants to select the approach that best supports their comfort and healing process.

**Description:** this session introduces mandala colouring as an art therapy technique that respects personal choice and autonomy, supporting trauma recovery among adult refugees. Participants will choose their mandala designs and colours, emphasizing the importance of self-expression and control in the healing process.

#### Duration:

60 minutes

#### Materials Needed:

- Various printed mandala designs (different levels of complexity)
- A wide range of colouring materials (coloured pencils, markers, crayons)
- Large sheets of paper and pens for reflections
- Relaxing background music (optional)
- Handouts with information on the benefits of art therapy and personal choice in healing (optional)

#### Steps:

1. **Introduction to Art Therapy and Personal Choices**
2. **Mandala Colouring Exercise**
3. **Reflection and Group Discussion**
4. **Conclusion and Takeaways**
5. **Follow-up**

#### Step 1: Introduction to Art Therapy and Personal Choice

- Begin with an overview of art therapy's role in trauma recovery, particularly emphasizing the importance of respecting personal choice in the process. Discuss how making choices in activities like mandala colouring can empower individuals, fostering a sense of control and autonomy that is often disrupted by trauma.
- Introduce the mandala as a tool for self-expression, where each participant can choose how to engage with the activity based on their preferences.

#### Step 2: Mandala Colouring Exercise:

- Distribute a variety of mandala designs and colouring materials, allowing participants to select the ones that appeal to them the most.
- Encourage participants to focus on their personal preferences in choosing colours and patterns, without worrying about the outcome. The goal is to use the activity as a means of

self-expression and relaxation, where each choice reflects their individuality and current emotional state.

- If participants prefer, they can use the large sheets of paper to create their own designs instead of colouring pre-made mandalas, further emphasizing personal choice.
- Play soft, calming music to create a soothing environment and remind participants to focus on their own experience.

### Step 3: Reflection and Group Discussion

- After the colouring session, invite participants to reflect on how making personal choices during the activity influenced their experience. Ask them to consider how this sense of control impacted their emotions or thoughts.
- Pose reflective questions such as:
  1. How did choosing your own mandala and colours make you feel?
  2. Did you notice any changes in your mood or sense of empowerment during the activity?
  3. How might respecting personal choice in art therapy be helpful in addressing trauma, particularly in a refugee context?
- Encourage participants to share their thoughts with the group, focusing on the theme of personal choice.

### Step 4: Conclusion and Takeaways

- Summarize the key points, highlighting the therapeutic value of respecting personal choice in art therapy to empower individuals and support their healing journey.
- Provide handouts or additional resources on art therapy and the role of personal choice in trauma recovery.
- Encourage participants to continue exploring activities that allow them to exercise personal choice, whether through art or other forms of self-expression.

### Step 5: Follow-Up

Encourage participants to reflect on how they can incorporate activities that respect their personal choices into their daily lives, whether through art or other practices. Suggest that they consider how these choices can help them regain a sense of control and autonomy in their healing process.

### Activity 3#: Movement and Paint - Empowering Personal Choice through Expressive Art Therapy

**Description:** this session combines movement with painting to introduce a more active and engaging form of art therapy that emphasizes personal choice and autonomy. Designed for adult refugees, the activity aims to empower participants to express themselves freely, supporting trauma recovery by allowing them to make choices that reflect their emotions and preferences.

**Duration:**

60 minutes

### **Materials Needed:**

- Large sheets of paper or canvas (for active painting)
- A variety of non-toxic, washable paints in different colours
- Paintbrushes, sponges, and the option to paint with hands (participants can choose their tools)
- Aprons or protective clothing
- Music for movement (optional)
- Handouts on the benefits of expressive arts and personal choice in trauma recovery (optional)

### **Steps:**

- 1. Introduction to Expressive Art Therapy and Personal Choice**
- 2. Movement and Painting Exercise**
- 3. Reflection and Group Discussion**
- 4. Conclusion and Takeaways**
- 5. Step 5**

#### **Step 1: Introduction to Expressive Art Therapy and Personal Choice**

- Start with an introduction to expressive art therapy, explaining how movement combined with painting can help individuals express emotions, reduce tension, and regain a sense of control. Emphasize the importance of personal choice in this process, allowing participants to decide how they wish to engage with the activity.
- Discuss how personal choice in art therapy can be especially empowering for refugees, offering a way to reclaim autonomy and express themselves in a safe environment.

#### **Step 2: Movement and Painting Exercise**

- Distribute the large sheets of paper or canvas and offer participants a selection of painting tools and colours.
- Encourage participants to start with a few minutes of free movement, allowing them to connect with their bodies and decide how they want to translate this movement into their painting.
- Ask participants to choose their tools and begin painting in a way that feels right for them. They might use broad, sweeping gestures, create intricate patterns, or simply explore how different movements create different marks on the paper. Emphasize that there is no right or wrong way to engage with the activity.
- Allow participants to explore their movements and painting freely, respecting their choices at every stage of the process. If music is played, remind participants that they can choose whether to move to the rhythm.

#### **Step 3: Reflection and Group Discussion**

- After the painting session, invite participants to reflect on their experience, focusing on the choices they made during the activity. Ask them to consider how these choices influenced their emotions and sense of empowerment.
- Pose reflective questions such as:
  1. How did making your own choices in movement and painting affect your experience?
  2. Did you feel more in control or empowered during the activity?



3. How might this type of expressive art therapy, which emphasizes personal choice, help in addressing trauma, particularly for refugees?

- Encourage participants to share their experiences, focusing on the theme of personal choice and autonomy.

#### **Step 4: Conclusion and Takeaways**

- Summarize the session, emphasizing the therapeutic potential of combining movement with art to empower individuals through personal choice. Highlight how respecting personal choice can be a powerful tool in trauma recovery, particularly in helping refugees regain a sense of control and autonomy.
- Provide handouts or resources on expressive arts therapy and the role of personal choice in trauma healing.
- Encourage participants to continue exploring activities that allow them to exercise personal choice, both in art and in their daily lives.

#### **Step 5: Follow-Up**

Invite participants to reflect on how they can incorporate activities that respect their personal choices into their daily routines. Suggest that they consider how making choices in creative and physical activities can help them regain a sense of control and support their healing journey.

## **Resources/Materials**

- <http://stacarecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/The-Care-Center-Neurobiology-of-Trauma-Nov-2016.pdf>.
- <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/fight-flight-or-freeze-response#freeze>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-tcKYx24aA> – From min 1:05 to 3:27.
- <https://jacksonhealth.org/2017-04-21-coloring-art-therapy/>.
- <https://mondaymandala.com/m/>.
- <https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TIP-K-3-TIP-SHEET.pdf>.

## Module 6 - Integration and social inclusion of refugees in training sessions

### Objective

Since the knowledge and experience level of trainers can be very different, we have planned the activities flexibly, with the possibility to implement an optional activity or to further practise this in VET training with refugee participants.

### Activities

#### Activity 1#: Exploring Refugee Recognition

##### Goals:

- To raise awareness about how trainers recognize refugees.
- To explore the impact of recognition on attitudes and interactions.
- To sensitize trainers to their own biases and emotions.

**Description:** In this activity, trainers reflect on their perceptions and recognition of refugees. By examining mental images, feelings, and sensitivities, they gain insight into their own biases and motivations. The goal is to foster empathy, self-awareness, and a clear understanding of their role as trainers.

##### Steps:

1. Introduction
2. Image Association
3. Group Discussion

##### Step 1: Introduction

Facilitator introduces the activity and its purpose. Trainers should think about their first “inner picture”, when they hear the word “refugee” and share their initial/first thoughts/feelings/body perceptions on recognizing refugees.

##### Step 2: Image Association

Participants receive a set of images related to refugees (e.g., diverse faces, crowded boats, refugee camps) and they choose 2-3 images and individually write down on post it papers their immediate associations, feelings, and stereotypes triggered by each image.

##### Step 3: Group Discussion

Participants form small groups, and they discuss:

- Which images evoked positive or negative feelings?
- What assumptions did they make based on the images?
- How might these assumptions impact their training approach?

(Additional option - role play): participants can free apply to work on a topic/problem/attitude, etc. with the help of a half-improvised role play or small groups can work together. The person who has

asked to participate formulates the topic in the context of this activity that he/she would like to work on. Then he/she leaves the room for 15 minutes. The group finds a scene in which he/she should take on the role of the trainer and offer the opportunity to work on the topic mentioned. In the other version, the small groups create roles and topics for each other with detailed descriptions of the roles to be played (with attitudes, feelings, mind-set, and background). The facilitator follows the role plays with instructions and questions if it is needed.)

**Reflection circle:** group members reflect:

- What biases or stereotypes did they uncover during the activity?
- How might these affect their interactions with refugees?
- What steps can they take to mitigate biases?

**Closing reflection and action planning:** Facilitator leads a discussion on the importance of self-awareness and continuous learning, commit to applying insights from the activity in their training practice using the handbook related parts. Participants brainstorm strategies to create a more empathetic and supportive training environment.

### Activity 2#: My feelings and attitudes – Exploring Resilience and Inner Resources

**Goals:**

- To raise awareness of refugees' emotional struggles.
- To encourage self-reflection on personal or ancestral experiences.
- To identify inner resources that trainers can offer to support refugees.

**Description:** trainers reflect on the emotional experiences related to refugees' challenges (loneliness, fear, loss, etc.). They explore their own history and/or their family history for similar situations and identify inner resources. By sharing and learning from each other, trainers gain insights to better support refugees.

**Steps:**

1. **Introduction**
2. **Personal reflection**
3. **Sharing in pairs or small groups**
4. **Collective insights**
5. **Inner resource brainstorm**
6. **Resource mapping**
7. **Closing reflection**

**Step 1: Introduction**

Facilitator explains the purpose of the activity. Trainers discuss briefly common emotional challenges faced by refugees (e.g., loneliness, fear of new beginning on a new place, displacement, hopelessness, isolation, segregation, loss of belongings and loved ones, missed relationships/support/prospects, the feeling of not being understood, vulnerability, struggle for basic life conditions, high external expectations while major internal problems, etc.).

**Step 2: Personal reflection: participants individually reflect**

- Have they ever experienced similar emotions or situations?

- Are there family stories related to displacement, resilience, or overcoming adversity?

### **Step 3: Sharing in pairs or small groups**

Participants pair up or form small groups, and share their reflections, discussing personal or family experiences. Questions to guide discussion:

- How did you, their family members or ancestors cope with challenges?
- What inner strengths or external support helped them?

### **Step 4: Collective insights**

Pairs or small groups reconvene as a larger group. Each pair/small group shares key insights:

- Common themes across personal stories.
- Patterns of resilience and resourcefulness.

### **Step 5: Inner resource brainstorm**

Participants individually identify 2-3 inner resources they possess (e.g., resilience, adaptability, empathy) as specific as they can (e.g. help of somebody, important sentences, small steps, invites to community, etc.) They consider how these resources can benefit refugee participants.

### **Step 6: Resource mapping**

Group members create a visual map or list of their identified inner resources. They discuss how to integrate these resources into their training practice.

### **Step 7: Closing reflection**

Facilitator leads a discussion on the importance of empathy, shared experiences, and leveraging inner strengths. Participants commit to applying their insights in supporting refugees.

## **Activity 3# Welcoming environment checklist for trainers**

### **Goals:**

- To ensure that the welcoming environment checklist aligns with the needs of trainers and their learners.
- To promote inclusivity, trust, and open communication.
- To create a customized version of the checklist for their training sessions.

**Description:** participants collaboratively review and adapt a pre-existing welcoming environment checklist. They discuss its relevance, cultural sensitivity, and practical implementation within their specific context.

### **Steps:**

- 1. Introduction to the checklist**
- 2. Group discussion**
- 3. Practical implementation (optional)**
- 4. Sharing and reflecting in the big group**

### **Step 1: Introduction to the checklist**

Facilitator introduces the existing welcoming environment checklist below. Briefly explains its purpose (e.g., creating a positive learning atmosphere).

### **Step 2: Group discussion**

- Participants discuss each item on the checklist in small groups.
- Consider its relevance to their specific context (working with adult refugees).
- Identify any items that may need modification.
- Cultural sensitivity review: discuss cultural nuances and potential adaptations.

### **Step 3: Practical implementation (optional)**

Brainstorm ways to incorporate checklist items during training sessions.

### **How to use this checklist?**

As trainers working with adult refugees, our role extends beyond imparting knowledge—we have the unique opportunity to create an environment that fosters trust, empathy, and empowerment. This checklist serves as a practical guide to help you establish a supportive and welcoming atmosphere in your training sessions. Whether you’re conducting vocational education and training (VET) programs, language classes, or specialized workshops, these questions will prompt thoughtful reflection and action.

Group Discussion and Adaptation:

- Training communities: gather with fellow trainers, colleagues, or community members. Discuss each question in the checklist. Share insights, experiences, and best practices.
- Expand and enrich: consider additional aspects relevant to your specific context. Adapt the questions to align with your training goals, participant demographics, and cultural nuances.

Individual Reflection:

- Self-Assessment: reflect on each question personally. Consider your own strengths and areas for growth.
- Continuous Learning: use the checklist as a tool for ongoing professional development. Seek resources, attend workshops, and learn from others.

### **Checklist:**

#### **1. Cultural competence and sensitivity**

- How familiar am I with the cultural backgrounds of the refugee participants?
- Have I knowledge and experiences about specific cultural norms, customs, and communication styles relevant to the refugee communities I’ll be working with? If not, how can I gain the needed skills and who can support me?
- What steps can I take to avoid stereotypes and assumptions based on cultural differences?

#### **2. Physical environment**

- Is the training room comfortable and conducive to learning?
- Are visual aids available to overcome language barriers?

- Are welcoming signs, posters, and culturally inclusive decorations available or can I prepare some to create an inviting atmosphere in the training room? (Who can help me – e.g. colleagues, fellow refugee participants?)
- How can I designate a quiet space where participants can retreat if needed, especially considering the potential emotional challenges faced by refugees?

### 3. Communication and interaction

- How can I actively listen to refugees' stories and experiences?
- What nonverbal cues can I use to convey openness and empathy?
- How can I encourage participation and create a safe space for sharing?
- How do we agree the group rules and standards?
- Which rules are fixed and should be adhered to under all circumstances, and which can be freely customised according to the needs of the group members?
- What strategies will I employ to be vigilant about any incidents of bullying or discrimination? How will I use group rules and norms to address such behaviour promptly?
- What tools and techniques do I have to model respectful behaviour as a trainer, and how will I encourage participants to do the same?
- How give I feedback to positive and negative behaviour reactions of participants to foster social-emotional learning?
- How can group members correct behavioural mistakes and which restorative techniques can we use in training sessions?

### 4. Inclusive teaching strategies (involved trauma-informed practices):

- How can I differentiate instruction to accommodate diverse learning styles and levels among refugees?
- What group activities can I incorporate to foster collaboration and build connections?
- What group activities can I incorporate to foster social-emotional learning? What are the main goals in the context of my training session?
- Am I aware of trauma-informed approaches and strategies to support refugees who may have experienced trauma?
- How will I create a safe space that avoids triggering memories for refugees who may have experienced trauma? What strategies can I use to teach acceptance of trauma responses and emotional regulation?
- How can I teach the important element of trauma-informed approach for participants to ask for support from me and each other, to provide support to each other if it is needed?
- What coping strategies and stress management techniques will I teach? How will I encourage self-compassion and resilience among participants?
- Which group events can strengthen the sense of belonging and safety? (e.g. celebrating small steps in learning pathway, celebrating important steps of settlement or private life like birthday)
- How will I ensure clear communication with participants? What techniques can I use to simplify language if it is needed and how will I develop language skills of participants?

- In case of language barriers, which translator services can be used for facilitation effective communication?
- How will I address language gaps among participants? What strategies can I use to provide content and exercises on different language levels? How will I support those with limited literacy skills?
- Can I create a buddy or peer system in my group? With which purpose? How can we ensure reciprocity?

#### 5. Social connections and community integration:

- How will I encourage adult refugees to connect with one another from the beginning of the training course? What activities or platforms can facilitate peer support and combat isolation?
- What networking opportunities can I facilitate for refugees to connect with local communities, organizations, and other refugees? What joint activities, cultural exchanges, or community events can foster engagement and a sense of belonging?
- How can I encourage participation in community events or activities outside of training sessions?
- Are there existing community support networks that I can tap into?

#### 6. Resource sharing and self-care:

- Have I explored online toolkits, webinars, or resources specifically designed for supporting refugees in training sessions?
- How can we share these resources with other trainers or participants?
- What local community resources can I connect refugees with (e.g., language classes, legal assistance, social services)?
- How and where can I ask for professional support on my workplace and in the wider professional community if I need it?
- How can I ensure my self-care? What can I do for my daily and my universal self-care to maintain my motivation and avoid burn-out?

#### Step 4: Sharing and reflecting in the big group

- Participants reflect on the checklist, emphasising elements that they were not aware of, or elements that could perhaps be added.

#### Activity 4# Life Journey Timeline Map

**Goal:** this exercise is designed to support trainers and can be implemented in small groups or individually with refugee participants. It is highly recommended to implement the activity yourself in a protected environment in the trainer community e.g. as part of a self-development course - this serves as self-awareness for further work. In this case we must plan the time according to the number of the group members. Main goals are:

- To help participants recognize their resilience, skills, and growth.
- To foster self-awareness and empower participants to take further steps in their integration process.
- To build a supportive community where participants learn from each other's experiences.

**Description:** in this activity, participants create a visual timeline map of their life journey, highlighting significant moments, challenges, and inner resources. Using long papers spread across the training room, participants physically step onto their timelines. Facilitated by the trainer and fellow group members, they explore their past, present, and future aspirations.

Trainers can dedicate this work to a specific topic, such as working only with inner resources or resilience, or only with career and professional issues, or for other central/broader topics where the participants need overview and continuance, or a developmental history should be presented. (The method is used in systemic psychotherapy and in couple and family therapy). Trainers can work with the activity in several stages and take it up several times during a process and supplement it with further aspects, so that at the end the participants have a very detailed timeline on which they can develop further plans or make decisions.

### Steps:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Mapping the past**
3. **Sharing and working**
4. **Stepping into the present (optional)**
5. **Future aspirations (optional)**
6. **Reflection and group support**
7. **Closing**

#### Step 1: Introduction

- The trainer explains the purpose of the activity and introduces the concept of a life journey timeline.
- Participants receive long papers (timeline strips) and markers. (Alternatively, can be used images, photos, symbols, picture of magazines or any picture-sets which are familiar for the participant from the earlier training sessions).

#### Step 2: Mapping the past

- Each participant starts at the beginning of their timeline (birth or earliest memory).
- The facilitator asks supportive questions:
  - What significant events or milestones shaped your past?
  - What challenges did you overcome?
  - What inner strengths helped you during difficult times?
- Participants draw a timeline and mark the date of the key moments and add some word and symbols or other pictures to it on their timeline.
  - The marks must contain a meaning just for the participants because they are the representations and remodelling of the inner insights and experiences.
  - The timeline should be a creative work of the participants. They are different opportunities: they can elaborate it like a road map, or like a number line with positive and negative fields (over and under the line), or like a tree timeline, project timeline (with marked stages and milestones).
  - The timelines should be suitable to be able to walk on them, to be able quasi to enter a situation properly. This may open further methodological possibilities, such as doing mini-systemic constellations or imaginative work on a specific milestone.



Methods, and techniques from cooperative learning and social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies that can be used during the “Life Journey Timeline Map” exercise:

- Cooperative learning strategies:
  - Group interaction: participants work collaboratively in small groups, sharing insights and supporting each other.
  - Peer learning: group members learn from each other’s experiences, fostering a sense of community.
  - Discussion and reflection: cooperative discussions allow participants to explore their life journeys, gain new perspectives, and refine their understanding.
  - Interpersonal skills: participants practice active listening, empathy, and respectful communication.
- Social-emotional learning (SEL) techniques:
  - Self-Awareness: participants reflect on their past, present, and future aspirations, enhancing self-understanding.
  - Emotional regulation: acknowledging trauma responses and managing emotions during the activity.
  - Empathy: through specific techniques, participants step into others’ perspectives, practicing empathy.
  - Relationship skills: building connections within the group and considering community engagement.
  - Resilience and coping: encouraging self-care, stress management, and resilience-building.
- Integration of skills:
  - Communication: Active listening, sharing personal stories, and providing supportive feedback.
  - Collaboration: Working together to create a safe space and explore life journeys.
  - Critical Thinking: Analysing past experiences, identifying inner resources, and envisioning future goals.
  - Self-Reflection: Considering personal growth, strengths, and areas for development.

### Step 3: Sharing and working

- Participants take turns sharing the most significant and relevant events/milestones from their timeline.
- The trainers accompany the individual participants through the timeline and discuss the most important milestones and all the contexts that should be considered and worked on during the activity.
- Trainers can ask group members for help on specific points, e.g.: if the working participant is stuck on a topic, e.g. cannot say anything in response to the question “What helped you in this situation?” /Does not recognise important aspects, the trainer can ask group members to make an “inner voice” and group members can give their aspects to the situation.
- Further question to support participants’ journey:
  - “What would your younger self say to you now/in this situation?”
  - “What would you say now to yourself in this moment?”
  - “What advice or encouragement do you need?”
  - “If you had the opportunity, which support would you involve?”

#### **Step 4: Stepping into the present (optional)**

Participants physically step onto their timeline, positioning themselves at their current age.

- What are your current goals and aspirations?
- How do your past experiences influence your present choices?
- What inner resources can you draw upon now?

#### **Step 5: Future aspirations (optional)**

Participants move along their timeline toward the future.

- Where do you see yourself in the next year? Five years?
- What steps will you take to achieve your goals?
- How can your community (group members) support you?
- What is the most difficult for you at this moment?
- What pulls you back or in a different direction?
- What support do you need?
- What decisions should you make?

#### **Step 6: Reflection and group support**

The trainer facilitates a group reflection:

- What insights did you gain from this exercise?
- How can you apply your inner resources to your integration journey?
- How can we support each other moving forward?

#### **Step 7: Closing**

- Participants roll up their timeline strips.
- The trainer gives a short summary and thanks for the in-depth work, emphasizes the importance of community, resilience, and continuous growth.

## **Recommendations for trainers**

Given the challenges on integration and social inclusion, some recommendations for VET professionals working with refugees:

- Work with smaller groups (3-5 people) to ensure focused discussions and personalized attention.
- Guided questions: as the trainer, ask open-ended questions to guide participants through each phase of their timeline.
- Inner voice technique: encourage participants to take on different perspectives.
- After each participant shares, facilitate a brief group reflection:
  - “What resonated with you from their story?”
  - “How can we support each other based on these insights?”

- Active listening skills: model active listening by maintaining eye contact, nodding, and showing genuine interest. Validate participants' experiences and emotions.
- Creating a safe space: remind participants that this is a safe and nonjudgmental space. Respect confidentiality—what's shared in the group stays within the group.
- Trauma Sensitivity: be aware of potential triggers related to trauma. Use gentle prompts and allow participants to share at their own pace.
- Encourage participants to adapt the activity to their unique experiences. Some may focus on career milestones, while others may focus more on exploring personal growth.
- Consider adding a section for future aspirations beyond the immediate timeline.
- If it is possible, make individual follow-up with participants after a few weeks.
- The individual steps can be worked through in several sessions. This allows a trauma-sensitive, slower but deeper and more effective inner work.

## Module 7 – Community Based Interventions

This module on Community Based Interventions is designed for VET professionals working with refugees in VET settings. It aims to equip trainers with the essential skills and knowledge to understand, design and implement successful community-based interventions for improving the mental well-being of refugees.

### Objectives

1. To help VET professionals define what community-based interventions are and understand their significance in supporting refugee mental well-being.
2. To equip VET professionals with the necessary skills to design and implement community-based interventions tailored to refugees needs.
3. To empower trainers to identify and understand the key components that contribute to the success of community-based interventions for refugees.
4. To enhance trainers' competence in exploring and applying various community-based interventions specifically aimed at improving the mental well-being of refugees.

### Activities

#### Activity 1#: understanding community-based interventions and their significance for refugees

**Goal:** define what community-based interventions are and understand why they are important for the recovery process of traumatised refugees.

**Description:** this activity aims to provide VET professionals with a comprehensive understanding of community-based interventions, including its definition and role as a supporting mechanism for promoting refugees' mental well-being. It particularly focuses on deepening their knowledge and enabling them to recognise the range of initiatives that prioritise healing and belonging within a supportive community context.

#### Steps:

1. **Presentation on community-based interventions**
2. **Real-life stories of different community-based interventions for refugees' recovery**
3. **Group discussion and reflection**

#### Step 1: Presentation on community-based interventions

This step is about introducing the concept of community-based interventions, its definition and importance for supporting refugees' mental well-being. It should focus on outlining what community-based interventions are, emphasizing their role in the recovery and mental well-being of refugees, and the types of services provided (e.g., counselling, therapy, social support networks). VET professionals can use, for example, slides, projector, or handouts summarising key points.

**Community-based interventions** are initiatives that prioritise healing, belonging, and thriving within the refugee community by offering services like counselling, therapy, and social support networks. They emphasize the importance of social connections and cultural sensitivity, providing refugees with a supportive community context to rebuild their lives. These interventions address mental health needs and complement other recovery efforts by fostering a nurturing environment, combining psychological support and community efforts to create stable and secure settings for refugees (Bonz A, 2023; Meyer S, 2013).

More concretely, the following are usually put forward as **key services provided** aimed at nurturing an inclusive community environment that support the mental well-being and overall recovery of refugees (Soltan F, Cristofalo D, et al, 2022; UNHRC, 2024):

### **1. Counselling and therapy**

Personalised individual and group counselling sessions, along with various therapeutic interventions (e.g., cognitive-behavioural therapy, trauma-focused therapy) to address specific mental health issues, provide tailored support and coping strategies, and promote recovery. Through group sessions, refugees can share experiences and support each other, fostering a sense of community and mutual understanding.

### **2. Social support networks**

Creating and facilitating connections among refugees and community members to build a supportive network that provides emotional and practical assistance, fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity. These networks can include family, support groups, mentorship programmes, community events, and partnerships with local organisations, all aimed at fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support.

### **3. Peer support groups**

Groups led by fellow refugees who have experienced similar challenges, offering peer-to-peer support and a safe space for sharing, mutual understanding, and collective healing.

### **4. Educational and cultural activities**

Programmes and events for refugees educate them on mental health and coping mechanisms while celebrating their cultural heritage. These activities include workshops on mental health awareness and coping strategies, as well as cultural events to honour and maintain their heritage, fostering a sense of identity and belonging.

### **5. Resource referral and integration services**

Assistance in connecting refugees with essential services such as healthcare, legal aid, housing, employment support, and language classes, ensuring a holistic approach to their well-being and smoother adaptation to their new environment.

## **Step 2: Real-life stories of different community-based interventions for refugees' recovery**

This step provides VET professionals with different real-life stories about successful community-based interventions that have supported refugees' mental health to deepen their understanding of their significance. Participants can be presented with different videos or articles about different initiatives that are said to have had a profound impact in the refugees with the support of the local community.

The following are two examples that can be put forward:

### **Example 1: Occupational therapy projects with refugees and asylum seekers in York, England (Institute for Social Justice at YSJU, 2023)**

A community-based project at York St John University, England, has been supporting refugees and asylum seekers for about six years, focusing on creating welcoming spaces and engaging activities. One such project involved running a jewellery-making table at a drop-in centre, attracting participants from around 20 countries. This initiative provided a sense of belonging and improved well-being, especially for women who had fewer recreational options compared to men. The jewellery-making activity allowed participants to express their creativity, build relationships, and maintain cultural connections, with some even incorporating cultural themes into their creations.

Additionally, the project included horticultural activities at an allotment, where refugees with backgrounds in farming could grow culturally significant foods. These activities not only connected them to their heritage but also fostered a sense of community and equality, breaking down power imbalances between volunteers and participants. The overall experience highlighted the importance of cultural diversity and the impact of inclusive, community-driven efforts on mental health and social integration.

### **Example 2: Christina's story of depression recovery in a refugee settlement (StrongMinds, 2021)**

Christina, a 28-year-old living in a refugee settlement in northeastern Uganda, has faced immense challenges, including fleeing Sudan, living with HIV, and raising her children alone after enduring an abusive marriage. Her depression began during her second pregnancy due to her husband's infidelity and abuse, which led to severe stress and neglect of her prenatal care and HIV treatments.

Christina's turning point came when she discovered StrongMinds, a mental health organisation offering therapy groups in her community. She joined a group and, for the first time, learned about depression and its triggers. Through group discussions and support, Christina found relief by sharing her problems and developing coping strategies. Today, she reports significant improvements in her mental health, stating her headaches are gone, she is more loving with her children, and she feels supported by knowing she can talk about her difficulties with others.

### **Step 3: Group discussion and reflection**

This step facilitates critical thinking and personal reflection on the material presented. Participants can be organised in a group discussion where they can share their thoughts and reflections on the video and article. VET professionals should be encouraged to discuss the potential challenges and benefits of implementing such interventions and how they can integrate these learnings into their practice. The activity can be concluded with a reflection session where each participant shares one key takeaway. For this, discussion guidelines, reflection sheets, a whiteboard or flipchart for noting key points can be used.

### **Key areas for reflection**

1. What do you perceive as the main challenges and benefits of implementing community-based mental health interventions, like those described in the video and article, within your own professional practice or community?
2. How can collaboration between VET professionals and community organisations enhance the support provided to refugees' mental well-being, and what steps can be taken to foster such collaborations?
3. Reflecting on the video and article, what is one key takeaway that you can integrate in your practice to better support the mental health and well-being of refugees?

### **Activity 2#: identifying the key components of successful community-based interventions**

**Goal:** enhance trainers' ability to design and implement effective community-based interventions for the mental well-being of refugees by having them identifying and understanding the key components that contribute to their success.

**Description:** this activity allows VET professionals to explore the essential components of successful community-based interventions that promote refugees' mental well-being and apply their knowledge through interactive collaboration scenarios.

### **Steps:**

- 1. Individual reflection on current community-based interventions**
- 2. Community resources mapping to leverage refugees' well-being support initiatives**
- 3. Collaboration scenarios with community organisations**

### **Step 1: Individual reflection on community-based interventions**

This step is about having participants reflecting on their current understanding of ongoing community-based interventions in their local context, also by conducting brief research on key components that contribute to their success in promoting refugees' well-being. VET professionals are provided with the non-exhaustive list of key components below (e.g., stakeholder engagement, cultural competence, resource mapping, sustainable partnerships) and should reflect on their experiences and research additional information on these components. Then, they should write down their thoughts and findings in a journal or worksheet.

Non-exhaustive list of **key components for a successful community-based intervention** for promoting the well-being of refugees (CEDEFOP, 2016; Jørgensen C, Hautz H & Li J, 2021):

#### **1. Stakeholder collaboration and sustainable partnership building**

Effective community-based interventions require the active involvement of various stakeholders, including VET professionals, community leaders, businesses, and local organisations. Collaboration ensures that the interventions are well-rounded, addressing multiple aspects of refugees' needs and leveraging diverse resources and expertise. Building long-term partnerships with community organisations and businesses ensures the sustainability of the interventions. These partnerships provide ongoing support and resources, making it possible to continue assisting refugees beyond the initial intervention period.

#### **2. Needs assessment, resource mapping and continuous monitoring and evaluation**

Conducting a thorough needs assessment helps identify the specific challenges and requirements of the refugee population in a VET context. This ensures that the interventions are tailored to address the actual needs, making them more relevant and effective. Identifying and mapping available community resources, such as local businesses, non-profits, and support services, helps create a comprehensive support network for refugees. This ensures that all necessary resources are used effectively. Additionally, regularly assessing the effectiveness of the interventions ensures that they are meeting their goals and allows for adjustments to be made as needed. This process helps maintain the quality and relevance of the interventions over time.

#### **3. Cultural sensitivity and social integration activities**

Understanding and respecting the cultural backgrounds of refugees is crucial. Interventions should be designed to be culturally appropriate, ensuring that they are accessible and acceptable to the target population. Also, facilitating social interactions between refugees and the local community helps build social networks and reduce feelings of isolation. Activities such as community events, mentorship programmes, and peer support groups can promote social cohesion and mutual understanding. Language classes and cultural exchange workshops can further bridge gaps and foster communication. Additionally, involving refugees in the planning and execution of these activities ensures their needs and preferences are directly addressed.

#### **4. Practical skills training and mental health support**

Providing refugees with practical, job-related skills enhances their employability and self-sufficiency. This includes vocational training, language skills, and other competencies that are directly applicable to the job market. Moreover, addressing the mental health needs of refugees is essential for their

overall well-being. Interventions should include access to counselling, therapy, and other mental health services to help refugees cope with trauma and stress. Community-based learning (CBL) plays a crucial role in this context by integrating educational experiences with real-world applications, fostering a sense of belonging and purpose (Kamdi W, 2015). Engaging refugees in community-based learning initiatives not only equips them with essential skills but also strengthens their social networks and supports their holistic development.

## 5. Empowerment and agency

Empowering refugees by involving them in the planning and implementation of interventions in a VET setting fosters a sense of ownership and agency. This participatory approach ensures that the interventions are more likely to be successful and sustainable. Additionally, it helps build their confidence and leadership skills, which are crucial for their personal and professional growth. By giving refugees, a voice in decision-making processes, we are also promoting inclusivity and respect for their unique perspectives and experiences.

### Key questions for individual reflection

1. How effectively are current community-based interventions in your local context engaging stakeholders, and what strategies could be implemented to improve this engagement?
2. In what ways do the community-based interventions you are familiar with demonstrate cultural competence, and how can they be further tailored to meet the diverse needs of refugee populations?
3. What resources are currently being mapped and used in your local community to support refugees, and how can sustainable partnerships be developed or strengthened to enhance these efforts?

### Step 2: Community resources mapping to leverage refugees' well-being support initiatives

This step is about having VET professionals identifying and mapping out available community resources that can be leveraged to support community-based interventions for promoting refugees' mental well-being.

For this, participants can be divided into small groups and should be provided with a list of key categories for mapping community resources. Each group should be encouraged to identify local organisations, services, and resources that could support refugee vocational training and mental health initiatives as well as consider resources such as NGOs, local businesses, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and cultural organisations. By considering these factors, VET professionals can effectively map community resources and create a supportive network that enhances the educational and personal development of refugee students.

After mapping, each group should present their findings, highlighting potential collaboration opportunities and gaps in available resources.

### Key categories for mapping community resources (Center of Transition Innovations, n.d.; Crane K & Mooney M, 2005)

- **Resource type:** identify the specific type of resource (e.g., educational institutions, NGOs, healthcare services, local businesses, government agencies, cultural organisations, financial services, housing services, transportation services, volunteer organisations) and evaluate its relevance to the needs of refugee students. Ensure that the resource can be seamlessly integrated into the VET curriculum to provide holistic support.



- **Organisation/service name:** identify a specific local organisation that fit your type of resource needed (e.g., educational institutions – local community college, NGOs – refugee support network, healthcare services – community health clinic, local businesses – local technology company, government agency – department of labour, cultural organisations – cultural integration centre, financial services – community credit union, housing services – affordable housing network, transportation services – city transit authority, volunteer organisations – local volunteer organisation).
- **Description of services:** gain a comprehensive understanding of the services offered (e.g., local community college – offers VET programmes; refugee support network – provides support services for refugees; community healthcare clinic – provides healthcare services to underserved populations; local technology company – provides internships; department of labour – provides employment services and resources; cultural integration centre – promotes cultural awareness and integration; financial services – offers financial services and education; housing services – provides affordable housing options; transportation services – provides public transportation services; volunteer organisations – connects volunteers with opportunities). Determine how these services can complement the VET programme and address the unique challenges faced by refugee students.
- **Services provided:** evaluate the specific services provided and their potential impact on refugee students (e.g., local community college – vocational courses, certifications; refugee support network – counselling, job placement, language classes; community healthcare clinic – medical check-ups, mental health services; local technology company – internships, job placements; department of labour – job fairs, employment counselling; cultural integration centre – cultural events, language classes; financial services – financial literacy workshops, savings accounts; housing services – housing assistance, rental support; transportation services – bus routes discounted fares; volunteer organisations – volunteer opportunity, community services). Develop a system for referring students to these services and track the outcomes to ensure effectiveness.
- **Potential collaborations:** identify areas for potential collaboration that can enhance the VET programme. This could include co-hosting events, providing internships, or sharing resources (e.g., local community college – guest lectures, curriculum development; refugee support network – joint workshops, mentorship programmes; community healthcare clinic – health education sessions, wellness programmes; local technology company – internship opportunities, job shadowing; department of labour – employment workshops, job fairs; cultural integration centre – cultural exchange programmes, community events; financial services – financial literacy workshops, savings programmes; housing services – housing assistance programmes, rental support; transportation services – transportation assistance programmes, discounted fares; volunteer organisations – volunteer recruitment, community service projects). Ensure that collaborations are designed to be sustainable and provide long-term benefits to both parties.

### Key questions for reflection

1. What local organisations, services, and resources are currently available in my community that can support refugee vocational training and mental health initiatives, and how can VET professionals effectively collaborate with them?
2. How can VET professionals ensure that the identified community resources are accessible and culturally appropriate for refugees, and what steps can they take to address any gaps or barriers in service provision?

3. What specific roles can local businesses, educational institutions, and cultural organisations play in supporting refugee vocational training and mental well-being, and how can VET professionals engage them in their community-based interventions?

### **Step 3: Collaboration scenarios with community organisations**

In this step, VET professionals will participate in scenario-based exercises where they will collaborate with community organisations to design community-based interventions to promote the well-being of refugees. Participants should be provided with several scenarios that mimic real-life situations involving community-based interventions for refugees' well-being (e.g., setting up a mentorship programme, organizing a health fair, creating job training workshops), such as the ones presented below. Divided in small groups, each group is assigned a different scenario and should compare it to the community resources mapping conducted in step 2 to identify organisations they could collaborate with if this scenario was to take place in their VET setting and explain why.

#### **Collaboration scenario 1: setting up a mentorship programme**

You have identified a need for a mentoring programme to support refugee students in their personal and professional development. The goal is to pair refugee students with mentors from the local community who can provide guidance, support, and networking opportunities. The need for such a programme was identified due to the isolation, anxiety, and difficulty navigating new educational and career pathways faced by your refugee students.

#### **Collaboration scenario 2: organising a health fair**

You have decided to organise a health fair in the school premises aimed at promoting mental and physical well-being of students, particularly targeting refugee students. The health fair will include workshops, health screenings, and information sessions on mental health resources. This solution was considered because you started to realise that many of your refugee students had experienced significant trauma and stress and might be dealing with mental health issues such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety. Thus, you believe that providing accessible health resources and education can help address these issues and support their overall well-being.

#### **Collaboration scenario 3: creating job training workshops**

You decide to create a series of job training workshops tailored to the needs of your refugee students as you understood they were facing barriers to employment due to lack of job-related skills and familiarity with the local job market. These workshops will focus on developing job-related skills, such as CV writing, interview techniques, and workplace communication to enhance their employability and boost their confidence, thereby promoting their overall well-being and integration into the community.

#### **Key questions for reflection**

1. What specific needs and challenges of refugee students does this scenario's initiative expects VET professionals to address, and how were these needs identified?
2. Who are the key stakeholders, i.e., community organisations that VET professionals need to engage, and what strategies can they use to ensure their active collaboration?
3. How can VET professionals ensure that their approach is culturally sensitive and inclusive, considering the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their refugee students?
4. What existing community resources can VET professionals further leverage to support the success of this scenario's initiative?

5. How will VET professionals measure the effectiveness and impact of this scenario's initiative on the well-being and development of their refugee students, and what steps can they take to ensure its sustainability over time?

### Activity 3#: effectively designing and implementing community-based interventions

**Goal:** to empower VET professionals with the skills and knowledge to design, implement, and evaluate community-based interventions that support the recovery and integration of refugees.

**Description:** this activity aims to guide VET professionals through a hands-on approach to learning from successful community-based intervention plans to then be able to design, implement, and evaluate their own intervention plans. It particularly focuses on deepening their understanding of the relevance of participatory approaches that support the recovery and integration of refugees.

#### Steps:

1. Learning from community-based intervention plans
2. Designing a community-based intervention plan for refugee's path to recovery
3. Group discussion and reflection on participatory approaches

#### Step 1: Learning from community-based intervention plans

This step provides VET professionals with different real-life examples of community-based intervention plans that have positively impacted refugee recovery to serve as an inspiration for step 2. Participants can be presented with different reports of these plans. The following is an example that can be put forward:

#### Example: The Neighbours United Refugee Strategic Community Plan (Neighbors United, 2023)

This Plan outlines a comprehensive approach to support refugee integration and self-sufficiency across various domains, including employment, transportation, community connections, health, education, and housing. The Plan emphasizes increasing workforce diversity, providing digital literacy workshops, and creating translated materials to support refugees in employment. It also focuses on improving transportation access through mobility training, route planning, and creating resource bundles. Community connections are strengthened by developing resource hubs, building individual capacity, and connecting communities to events and leaders. Health initiatives include increasing education and accessibility, leveraging community liaisons, and educating providers on refugee care.

The Plan also addresses educational needs by engaging parents, training teachers, and enhancing support for newly arrived students. It aims to increase access to afterschool and summer programmes and secure transportation resources. Housing initiatives focus on addressing gaps due to increased rental rates, advocating for increased housing capacity, and creating communication channels for sharing housing needs. This Plan, developed through extensive community collaboration and feedback, is designed to guide efforts over two years, with regular updates to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness in creating a welcoming and supportive community for refugees.

#### Step 2: Designing a community-based intervention plan for refugee's path to recovery

This step is about having participants applying the knowledge and resources identified in previous activities to design, implement, and evaluate a detailed community-based intervention plan. VET professionals should focus on creating realistic and actionable strategies that address both vocational training and mental health needs of refugees. For this, participants should be provided with the following step-by-step framework, fill it, and then present it to receive feedback from peers to refine their strategies, if needed.

**Step-by-step framework for designing and implementing effective community-based intervention plans (LinkedIn, n.d.; Nagy J & Fawcett S, n.d.; Yilmaz S & Conte C, 2024):**

- **Identify the problem and the community:** define the specific issue affecting the refugee community in your VET setting and identify the target group. This involves setting a clear and specific goal, understanding the scope and magnitude of the problem and defining the community by geographic, demographic, cultural, or other relevant criteria. Consider the diversity, strengths, and challenges of the community and how they relate to the problem and the intervention.
- **Assess the needs and assets of the community:** conduct a comprehensive needs assessment using both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the community's strengths and challenges. Collect data through surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, or secondary data analysis. Involve community members and stakeholders in the data collection and analysis process to ensure their perspectives, opinions, and experiences are included and respected.
- **Design the intervention based on evidence and best practices:** create a detailed intervention plan by reviewing relevant literature and existing interventions that have addressed similar problems. Identify theories, models, principles, and strategies that can guide your intervention. Consult with community members and stakeholders to incorporate their feedback and ensure the intervention is feasible, acceptable, and sustainable within the community context and culture.
- **Implement the intervention with fidelity and flexibility:** execute the intervention plan consistently and accurately, while monitoring and documenting the implementation process. Collect data on the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the intervention. Be flexible and responsive to any changes or challenges that arise, making necessary adjustments. Maintain open communication and collaboration with community members and stakeholders to keep them informed and engaged.
- **Evaluate the intervention with rigor and relevance:** use appropriate and valid methods and measures to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the intervention. Compare the results with the intervention's goals and objectives, using relevant indicators and criteria to evaluate quality and value. Involve community members and stakeholders in the evaluation process and share the findings and implications with them.
- **Disseminate and scale up the intervention with evidence and ethics:** share the results and expand the intervention responsibly. Communicate and disseminate the results and lessons learned from the intervention through various channels and formats to reach different audiences and stakeholders. Use the evidence and best practices to inform and influence policy and practice, advocating for change and improvement. Consider the possibilities and challenges of scaling up the intervention, ensuring it can be replicated or adapted to other settings and contexts. Follow ethical principles and standards of community-based research, respecting the rights and interests of the community.

**Step 3: Group discussion and reflection on participatory approaches**

This step facilitates a critical thinking and personal reflection on the significance of participatory approaches in community-based interventions, particularly the engagement of refugees in the design of these initiatives. Participants can be organised in a group discussion where they can share their thoughts and reflections about the importance of involving refugees in the design and implementation of community-based interventions. VET professionals should be encouraged to discuss how they can

effectively engage refugees in these initiatives. The activity can be concluded with a reflection session where each participant shares one challenge and solution in adopting participatory approaches. For this, discussion guidelines, reflection sheets, a whiteboard or flipchart for noting key points can be used.

A **participatory approach** involves actively engaging stakeholders, including community members, in the decision-making process to ensure their needs and perspectives are considered, fostering ownership and more effective outcomes (UNHCR, n.d.).

A participatory approach in the context of community-based interventions involves actively involving refugees in the decision-making process to ensure their needs, perspectives, and aspirations are directly addressed. This approach fosters empowerment, ownership, and more effective, culturally sensitive solutions by leveraging the insights and experiences of the refugee community (UNHCR, n.d.).

### Key areas for reflection

1. Why is it important to involve refugees in the design and implementation of community-based interventions that specifically target their well-being?
2. How can VET professionals effectively engage refugees in the planning and execution of these initiatives?
3. What are some challenges in adopting a participatory approach, and what solutions can address these obstacles?

## Recommendation for trainers

Given the challenges on community-based interventions for refugee's recovery, some recommendations for VET professionals working with refugees:

- Ensure that all VET professionals undergo training in cultural sensitivity and awareness to better understand the diverse backgrounds and experiences of refugee students.
- Adopt a trauma-informed approach in all interactions and interventions, recognising the signs of trauma and understanding its impact on learning and behaviour.
- Provide comprehensive support services that address not only educational and vocational needs but also mental health, social integration, and physical well-being.
- Build strong partnerships with local community organisations, healthcare providers, and mental health professionals to create a robust support network for refugee students.
- Offer language support services, including English as a Second Language classes, to help refugee students overcome language barriers and improve their communication skills.
- Develop mentorship programmes that pair refugee students with mentors from the local community who can provide guidance, support, and networking opportunities.
- Create flexible learning pathways that accommodate the unique needs and circumstances of refugee students, allowing them to progress at their own pace.
- Provide career counselling and job placement services to help refugee students navigate the job market and find employment opportunities that match their skills and interests.
- Foster a safe and inclusive learning environment where refugee students feel welcomed, respected, and valued.
- Regularly seek feedback from refugee students and other stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of interventions and make necessary adjustments to improve outcomes.

## Resources/Materials

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## Module 8 - Self-Care for Professionals

### Objective

The following activities and their implementation depend on the self-awareness, knowledge and personal experience in the field of self-care of professionals. The individual activities implemented one after the other create at the end a result that supports the participants to establish a comprehensive picture about their motivation, about the challenges related to stressors, about the needs and aspects of self-care and about the possibilities to create a supportive environment in the working community. The activities can also be realised independently but can lead to a deeper and more effective impact if they are built together with the artistic tasks.

### Activities

#### Activity 1#: Personal-professional motivation - with vision board

##### Goals:

- To enhance self-awareness
- To prevent burnout and strengthen participants' connection to their chosen profession.
- To prepare the exercise related self-care and personal wellness-plan

**Description:** Participants explore their motivation for working as trainers in adult educational settings with refugee group members. They then create a vision board to visually represent their personal-professional identity.

##### Steps:

1. Introduction
2. Motivation exploration
3. Vision Board Creation
4. Sharing in the Group

##### Step 1: Introduction

Facilitator introduces the activity and its purpose. Trainers can think about their first decision and steps toward this profession and about their present feelings, thoughts, insights, why are they practicing this job now.

##### Step 2: Motivation exploration

Participants discuss in pairs why they chose and practice their role as trainers in adult education with refugee groups. They reflect on their motivations, which may include a sense of control, security, compensation, or other factors. The facilitator can help with questions or with expressions visualized on a board, if he/she finds it necessary.

##### Possible questions:

- What brings you pleasure in your role as a trainer with refugee groups?
- When do you feel that you are in the right place as a trainer?
- What unique strengths or skills do you bring to your work with refugees?

- Which activities give you a sense of power, joy, or fulfilment?
- How do the tasks you perform as a trainer satisfy your personal needs or values?

### **Step 3: Vision Board Creation**

Using a medium-sized paper, participants create a vision board. They can use images, magazine cutouts, symbols, words, quotes, or affirmations to visualize their professional identity. The vision board represents their inner motivations and aspirations.

### **Step 4: Sharing in the Group**

Participants share their vision boards with the larger group, providing context briefly and explaining the elements they included shortly. This fosters connection, mutual understanding, and a sense of community.

## **Activity 2# Identifying Personal Stressors: Collage Activity**

### **Goals:**

- To raise awareness about potential stressors in the trainer profession.
- To encourage self-reflection and self-honesty.
- To emphasize the importance of self-care as a preventive measure against burnout.

**Description:** participants explore and identify their personal stressors related to their role as trainers. They create collages that visually represent these stressors.

### **Steps:**

- 1. Challenges discussion**
- 2. Understanding burnout**
- 3. Group formation**
- 4. Collage creation**
- 5. Presentation**

### **Step 1: Challenges discussion**

Facilitator leads a discussion where participants summarize the challenges they face as trainers in a list during a fast brainstorming. These challenges serve as potential stressors and can contribute to burnout.

### **Step 2: Understanding burnout**

Using knowledge from the handbook, the facilitator highlights background information about burnout risk, role of empathy, signs, symptoms, and stages of burnout. Participants can share their experiences and insights shortly.

### **Step 3: Group formation**

Participants form small groups (3-4 members) to discuss individual stressors. They focus on physical, behavioural, emotional symptoms and difficulties/negative thoughts related to stress. In an advanced group they can mark the level of they stress in each area or for each symptom. (Optional can be used a related resource: Tool 9# from the Toolbox of the Prosilient VET Project [Prosilient-VET-Toolbox official-EN-version.pdf \(prosilientvet.eu\)](#))



Facilitator emphasizes that stressors can be very individual and sometimes surprising. The goal is to identify even tiny stressors (e.g., specific noises, habits, tasks) for self-awareness. Every finding is a good one, there are no bad answers.

#### **Step 4: Collage Creation**

Each participant creates a collage using images, cutouts, drawings, and words related to their identified stressors. The collages visually represent their unique experiences.

(If the trainer has planned this activity accordingly, the participants should place the stressor collages on a larger piece of paper together with the motivation mapping from the previous activity.)

#### **Step 5: Presentation**

Participants briefly present their collages to the whole group, explaining the elements they included. This fosters understanding and empathy.

### **Activity 3# Personal self-care and wellness planning**

#### **Goals:**

- To promote self-awareness and self-care among trainers.
- To identify strategies for managing stress and challenges.
- To create a visual representation of individualized self-care techniques.

**Description:** participants develop personalized self-care and wellness plans to prevent burnout and enhance their well-being. The focus is on maintaining a wide “window of tolerance” and considering culturally sensitive practices.

#### **Steps:**

- 1. Window of tolerance explanation**
- 2. Well-being strategies discussion**
- 3. Creating personal strategies**
- 4. Sharing and expansion**
- 5. Completion and reflection**

#### **Step 1: Window of tolerance explanation**

Facilitator explains the concept of the “window of tolerance,” emphasizing the importance of staying within this optimal range for emotional regulation.

#### **Step 2: Well-being strategies discussion**

Facilitator discusses fundamental aspects of self-care practices (e.g., rest, nutrition, exercise), setting boundaries, seeking support and supervision, culturally sensitive self-care practices highlighted (background in the handbook).

#### **Step 3: Creating personal strategies**

- Participants work individually to collect self-care techniques and methods for body, emotions, and mind for themselves. They consider their stressors identified in the previous activity.
- Facilitator provides round pieces of paper or post-its (different colours) with relevant symbols (e.g., heart for emotions, brain for mind, figure for body, etc.).

- Participants write specific self-care methods on separate pieces of paper or post its.
- Optional: They arrange these around or beside their previous visualizations from other activities. The essence of this approach is that the stressors are surrounded by the elements of the self-care plan to show what solutions/answers can be given to the challenges/stressors.

#### **Step 4: Sharing and expansion**

Participants take turns sharing their visual self-care plans. Each subsequent participant expands the plan by adding 1-2 further techniques or steps. Facilitator encourages cross-pollination of ideas among participants.

#### **Step 5: Completion and reflection**

Participants complete their self-care plans, incorporating elements from others if relevant. Reflection on the importance of personalized self-care concludes the activity.

### **Activity 4# Creating a well-being blueprint**

#### **Goals:**

- To empower trainers to actively contribute to a culture of well-being.
- To generate practical ideas for enhancing self-care within the community.
- To create a tangible visual representation of their collective vision.

**Description:** participants collaboratively design a visual blueprint for fostering well-being within their working community. They identify short, medium, and long-term interventions to support self-care of professionals.

#### **Steps:**

- 1. Introduction and context setting**
- 2. Brainstorming interventions**
- 3. Visual scenario creation**
- 4. Group sharing, refinement, reflection**

#### **Step 1: Introduction and context setting**

Facilitator explains the importance of community well-being and the role of trainers in shaping it.

#### **Step 2: Brainstorming interventions**

Participants work in pairs or in small group to brainstorm interventions. Consider short-term (immediate), medium-term (within a few months), and long-term (over a year) strategies. They must find min. 3 elements for each category. (They can use any of the aspects written in the Handbook)

#### **Step 3: Visual scenario creation**

- Participants use paper, markers, and other art supplies to create visual scenarios. Each scenario represents an intervention.
- A much more interesting and creative approach is to create scenes with participants and objects in the room, make photos and print them.
- As an integration task, participants add their visual scenarios to their existing boards. This completes the holistic picture of self-care and community support.

**Step 4: Group sharing, refinement, reflection (15 minutes):**

- Participants share their visual scenarios with the group. If time allows, they can discuss the rationale behind each intervention.
- They can collaboratively refine and improve the scenarios based on feedback.
- Facilitator leads a reflection on the collective vision.

## Recommendation for trainers

Given the challenges on self-care for professionals, some recommendations for VET professionals working with refugees:

- For the visual realisation of the tasks, it is recommended to prepare papers of different sizes. The first activity forms the core, it is recommended to consider this visual board in the next activity as part of a larger picture and so on.
- It can also be presented as a round picture, with the motivation mapping in the centre, the stressors all around, and the other parts of the following exercises added.
- Another approach can be that the individual visual realisations are placed next to each other at the end and reflected upon. Facilitators can choose the most appropriate version for the group.
- Facilitators can encourage participants to add further aspects to these creations at a later stage. These are, of course, imprints of the present moment; further insights can further chisel, expand and deepen the picture.

## Module 9 - Legal and Ethical Considerations

### Objective

Please describe 3-5 activities/exercises per module that are related to the specific guidance and key principles mentioned in the training curriculum. The activities focus on the promoting and support of mental wellbeing of refugees and can be applied in group or individual settings. You can also develop both variations for group work or individual settings.

### Activities

#### Activity 1#: Confidentiality

**Goal:** Understand and apply the principle of confidentiality in various scenarios.

**Description:** group work.

#### Steps:

- 1. Divide participants into three small groups**
- 2. Provide each group with different scenarios where confidentiality might be challenged:**

Scenario I: A refugee woman discloses to you that she is experiencing severe domestic abuse from her husband. She is fearful for her safety and that of her children but is also terrified of her husband finding out that she has spoken to someone about it and that the partner could be deported. What would you do?

Scenario II: You notice signs of physical abuse on a refugee child, but the child does not give any information. What would you do?

Scenario III: You need to share information about a refugee student's mental health with teachers to provide appropriate support. What would you do?
- 3. Groups work on one scenario, discussing how to maintain confidentiality on one hand and fulfil their legal obligations on other. What are the risks? What steps would be taken?**
- 4. Each group presents their scenario and solution. Facilitate a discussion. Debrief how to handle challenging situations.**

### Recommendations for trainers

To follow whether participants pay attention at least:

For the first case: That the client must be provided with safe environment; discuss a safety plan, including safe places she can go; how to reach out for help, and what to do if she needs to leave quickly; if she is injured, advise her to seek medical attention; ensure she knows how to access emergency services; make sure that the client understands the limits of confidentiality, particularly concerning threats to her safety or the safety of her children; inform the client about mandatory reporting laws, especially if there is a risk of serious harm or abuse; address her concerns about deportation; connect her with a lawyer; be aware of her cultural background and potential barriers, such as language, stigma, or community pressures; avoid pushing her into decisions she is not ready to make; work with other professionals and agencies.

For the second case: carefully document any signs of physical abuse, including descriptions of injuries, their locations, and the child's behaviour; ensure the child feels safe and secure; what are the

mandatory reporting laws in your jurisdiction; report the suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities promptly, providing detailed observations and any relevant information; be sensitive to cultural and language barriers; involve child protection specialists who have experience working with refugee children and can conduct a more in-depth assessment; work with a multidisciplinary team; collaborate with child protection services to develop a safety plan that ensures the child's immediate and long-term safety; assess the family's situation; avoid forcing the child to disclose information. For the third case: What are the legal and ethical guidelines regarding the confidentiality of student health information in your jurisdiction and field; obtain informed consent from the student (if age-appropriate) and their guardians before sharing any mental health information; clearly explain what information will be shared, with whom, and for what purpose; share only the information that is necessary for teachers to provide appropriate support; avoid disclosing sensitive details that are not relevant to the student's educational needs; ensure that only relevant staff members who need to know about the student's mental health to provide support are informed;

## Reflective questions

- Why confidentiality is important?
- What does confidentiality mean to you, and why is it crucial in your work with refugees?
- What are the potential consequences of breaches?
- What are the legal obligations to report?
- What are some common challenges you face in maintaining confidentiality when working with refugees?
- How do you handle situations where maintaining confidentiality might conflict with other professional responsibilities or legal requirements?
- What steps do you take to ensure that refugees understand how their information will be used and protected?
- How do you respond if you become aware of a breach of confidentiality within your organization or practice?
- How does the use of technology affect confidentiality in your work?

## Activity 2#: Informed Consent

**Goal:** to enhance understanding of obtaining informed consent in a culturally sensitive manner.

**Description:** role play exercise

**Steps:**

- 1 **Divide participants into three small groups**
- 2 **Each group is provided with sample consent forms to participate in a programme**
- 3 **Each group assigns one participant as refugee: Group one unaccompanied minor, group two women victim of gender-based violence, group three trafficking in human beings' survivor**
- 4 **Group Feedback: Each group presents their approach and receives feedback from peers on cultural sensitivity and clarity of information.**

## Recommendations for trainers

To follow whether participants pay attention at least:

**For group one: Unaccompanied Minor**

Are there any legal requirements regarding consent for minors, including obtaining consent from a legal guardian or a representative of the child; providing information in a manner that is understandable for the minor's age and cognitive development; ensuring that the minor understands that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time without any negative consequences; considering involving a support person (e.g., a trusted adult or social worker) who can help the minor understand the information and provide emotional support.

#### **For group two: Women Victim of Gender-Based Violence**

Clearly explaining how the information will be kept confidential and the measures taken to protect the privacy of the client, ensure that the consent process is free from any form of coercion or pressure; emphasizing that participation is entirely voluntary; are aware of cultural nuances and provide information in a culturally sensitive manner; creating a safe and supportive environment where the participant feels comfortable asking questions and expressing concerns.

#### **For group three: Trafficking in Human Beings' Survivor**

About taking time to build trust before seeking consent; providing a thorough explanation of what participation involves, including any potential risks, benefits, and the right to withdraw at any time; explaining that the client has control over her participation and can make decisions about her involvement; informing about available support services and ensure they understand how to access these resources if needed; assuring that the information will be kept confidential and explain the steps taken to protect her privacy; ensuring that participants fully understand the information provided; this may involve checking comprehension by asking them to repeat the key points in their own words; documenting the consent process carefully, including any questions asked by the participant and the answers provided.

## Reflective questions

- What does informed consent mean to you, and why is it important in your work with refugees?
- How do you ensure that a refugee fully understands what they are consenting to?
- What challenges have you encountered when obtaining informed consent from refugees?
- How can language barriers impact the informed consent process, and what strategies can you use to overcome these barriers?
- How can you ensure that the informed consent process is culturally sensitive and respectful?
- How do you verify that a refugee truly understands and agrees to the terms of consent?
- How does the informed consent process empower refugees and respect their autonomy?

### Activity 3#: Non-Discrimination principle

**Goal:** to explore and address issues of discrimination and promote equal access to mental health support. To reflect on personal attitudes and commitments to non-discrimination.

**Description:** group work.

#### **Steps:**

1. **Divide participants into three small groups**
2. **Provide each group with different scenarios raising discrimination issues:**  
 Scenario I: A refugee seeks mental health services at a local clinic but is repeatedly turned away or given appointments far in the future, while other patients without refugee status seem to receive timely care. What would you do?

Scenario II: A refugee working in a factory notice that they and other refugees are given less desirable tasks and shifts compared to non-refugee workers. Additionally, they experience derogatory comments from colleagues and supervisors about their refugee status. What would you do?

Scenario III: A refugee attempts to access public services, such as welfare benefits or job training programs, and encounters unhelpful or hostile attitudes from service providers. They are frequently given inaccurate information or excessive bureaucratic hurdles compared to non-refugee applicants. What would you do?

3. **Groups discuss their scenario, identifying discriminatory practices and brainstorming ways to ensure equal access and support**
4. **Groups present their scenarios and solutions, encouraging a discussion on promoting inclusivity and non-discrimination.**

## Recommendations for trainers

- Clearly explain what non-discrimination means, including the key principles and how they apply to different contexts, especially when working with diverse populations.
- Provide an overview of relevant laws and international standards related to non-discrimination.
- Help participants recognize subtle forms of discrimination and bias that may not be immediately apparent and discuss strategies for addressing them.
- Provide guidance on how to handle discrimination complaints.
- Discuss the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences and how these can impact perceptions of discrimination.

## Reflective questions

- Have you ever witnessed or experienced discrimination in your personal or professional life?
- What does non-discrimination mean to you in the context of working with refugees?
- How do you differentiate between direct and indirect discrimination? Can you provide examples of each?
- What are the key legal instruments and policies that protect refugees from discrimination in your country?
- How can understanding cultural backgrounds help prevent discriminatory practices when working with refugees?
- Can you identify any biases you might hold? How might these biases influence your behaviour towards refugees or other marginalized groups?

## Resources/Materials

- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants on the Move in Europe by WHO and UNHCR: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-for-refugees-asylum-seekers-andmigrants-on-the-move-in-europe>.
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Humanitarian Emergencies: What should humanitarian health actors know? by the IASC Reference Group for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support: [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/what\\_humanitarian\\_health\\_actors\\_should\\_know.pdf/](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/what_humanitarian_health_actors_should_know.pdf/).

- United Nations Refugee Agency. Global trends report: world at war. Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2016: <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5943e8a34/global-trends-forced-displacement-2016.html>.
- UNICEF: Child Displacement: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-migration-and-displacement/displacement/>.
- Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/convention-and-protocol-relating-status-refugees>.



## Module 10 - Referral to Health Professionals

### Activities

#### Activity 1#: Developing Referral Guidelines

**Objective:** trainers will create their own guidelines for referring refugees to specialists, ensuring a clear and effective referral process.

**Steps:**

1. Discuss common scenarios that might require referral to specialists (e.g., severe PTSD, suicidal ideation).
2. Identify key indicators that a referral is necessary.
3. Develop a step-by-step guideline for making a referral, including identifying appropriate specialists, obtaining consent, and following up.
4. Share and review guidelines in small groups, providing feedback and refining the guidelines.

#### Activity 2#: Mapping and Utilizing Networks

**Objective:** trainers will map their professional networks and explore ways to utilize these networks for supporting refugees.

**Steps:**

1. Individually list all relevant contacts and institutions within your professional network (e.g., healthcare providers, community organizations, mental health professionals).
2. Create a visual map of your network, indicating the relationships and connections between different contacts and institutions.
3. In small groups, discuss strategies for effectively utilizing these networks to support refugees (e.g., coordinating services, sharing resources).
4. Develop an action plan for enhancing and expanding your network to better meet the needs of refugees.

#### Activity 3#: Role Play Scenario

**Objective:** trainers will practice handling challenging situations through role play, enhancing their skills in referral and support.

**Steps:**

1. Divide into pairs or small groups. Each group selects or is assigned a challenging scenario involving a refugee in need of referral (e.g., a refugee exhibiting severe anxiety and panic attacks).
2. One person plays the role of the refugee, while another plays the role of the trainer. A third person can observe and provide feedback.

- 3. Conduct the role play, focusing on recognizing the need for referral, discussing the referral process with the refugee, and providing emotional support.**

After the role play, discuss what went well and what could be improved. Share insights and strategies with the larger group.