Refugee Mental Health

Second Refugee Forum
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UC Davis Law and Medical Schools

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Migration

Refugees
- Push Factors
  - Fear and trauma
  - Broken Dreams
  - Unprepared

Immigrants
- Pull Factors
  - Hope
  - Dreams
  - Preparation for Future
Premigration Stress

- Psychological and Physical Trauma
- Loss
- Survivor’s Guilt
Intra-migration Stress

- Trauma and Loss
- Confinement and Uncertainty
- Poverty and crowding
Resettlement Stressors

- Language
- Discrimination
- Family Disruption
- Loss of Role and Identity
- Poverty and access barriers to services
Mental Health

- Increased prevalence of PTSD and Depression (15-30%)
- Greatest risk in refugees with age of migration <12 or >41 years old
Adaption and Development After Persecution and Trauma (ADAPT) model

- Safety and security
- Interpersonal bonds and networks
- Justice
- Roles and identities and
- Existential meaning and coherence.
Domains of Post Traumatic Growth*

• Discovery of new opportunities and possibilities that were not present before
• Closer relationships with others, especially others who suffer
• Greater appreciation for life
• Greater sense of personal strength: “If I lived through that, I can face anything”
• Spiritual growth

* Tedeschi and Calhoun 1995
“To be called a refugee is the opposite of an insult; it is a badge of strength, courage, and victory.”

[Tennessee Office for Refugees]