How to Provide Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Care for Older Refugees

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Objectives

1. **Realize**
   - Learn how trauma impacts the health and well-being of older adults and older refugees.

2. **Respond**
   - Learn how to integrate knowledge of trauma and aging into services through SAMHSA's 6 key principles of trauma-informed care.

3. **Get Inspired**
   - Get inspired by successful implementation of person-centered, trauma-informed services for older refugees.

4. **Ask Questions**
   - Ask how your work can be more person-centered and trauma-informed.
Outline

1. The Link Between Trauma and Aging
2. Introduction to Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Care
3. Promising Practices in Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Care for Older Refugees
4. Questions & Answers
5. Next Steps
Speakers

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Program Manager for the Community Care Transitions Program, Salt Lake County Aging & Adult Services

Leah Bergen Miller
Associate Director of the Center on Aging and Trauma, The Jewish Federations of North America
Center on Aging and Trauma

Who We Are

**Mission**
Expand the nation’s capacity to provide Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed (PCTI) services and supports for Holocaust survivors, older adults with a history of trauma, and family caregivers.

**Goal 1**
**Develop Innovations.** Fund and support subgrants to develop PCTI programs for Holocaust survivors, older adults with a history of trauma, and their family caregivers.

**Goal 2**
**Build Capacity.** Increase the knowledge and skills of aging service providers to implement PCTI care for Holocaust survivors, older adults with a history of trauma, and their family caregivers.
Center on Aging and Trauma

Our Subgrantees: 2015-2020

- 21 States Supported Through Grant Programming
- 15,000 Holocaust Survivors Served
- 10,000 Professionals Trained
- 4,000 Family Caregivers Supported
- 200+ Programs Implemented
The Link Between Trauma and Aging
What is Trauma?

Individual trauma is a result of an event, series of events, or set of circumstances which present physical or emotional harm to an individual, or are life threatening, and have lasting adverse effects on an individual’s functioning and wellbeing.

90% of adults in the United States have been exposed to at least one traumatic event in their lifetime.

25,000,000 individuals in 2017 were affected by natural disasters in the US

10,000,000 individuals experience domestic violence annually in the US

1,200,000 individuals are victims of violent crime annually in the US

*Center on Aging and Trauma (2020). Health and Trauma. Factsheet. [https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-42/2/HealthAndTrauma_FactSheet_CenterOnAgingAndTrauma%25281%2529.pdf](https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-42/2/HealthAndTrauma_FactSheet_CenterOnAgingAndTrauma%25281%2529.pdf)
Trauma and Health Are Linked

An individual’s trauma exposure is linked to their propensity for developing a wide range of conditions that negatively impact their physical, mental, and cognitive health. Trauma exposure has been associated with:

**Physical Health**
- Lung disease
- Gum disease
- Fibromyalgia
- Chronic fatigue
- Cardiovascular disease
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Endocrine disorders
- Reproductive disorders

**Mental Health**
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicidal Ideation
- Mood Disorders
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse

**Cognitive Health**
- Dementia
- Sleep Disorders
- Cognitive Impairments

*Center on Aging and Trauma (2020). Health and Trauma. Factsheet. [https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-42/2/HealthAndTrauma_FactSheet_CenterOnAgingAndTrauma%25281%2529.pdf](https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-42/2/HealthAndTrauma_FactSheet_CenterOnAgingAndTrauma%25281%2529.pdf)*
What is PTSD?

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, is a mental health condition that may develop after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event resulting in heightened and prolonged stress response. This condition requires clinical diagnosis.

8% of the United States population will experience Posttraumatic Stress Disorder during their lifetime.

Rates of trauma exposure and subsequent PTSD are higher among certain demographics.

46% of Holocaust survivors have PTSD

35% of first responders have PTSD

30% of refugees have PTSD

* Center on Aging and Trauma (2020). Health and Trauma. Factsheet. [https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-42/2/HealthAndTrauma_FactSheet_CenterOnAgingAndTrauma%25281%2529.pdf](https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-42/2/HealthAndTrauma_FactSheet_CenterOnAgingAndTrauma%25281%2529.pdf)
Trauma Affects Aging

Trauma impacts individuals of all ages and the effects of trauma evolve over time.

- Symptoms of trauma can evolve after long symptom-free periods.
- Symptoms of trauma can emerge for the first time during older adulthood - decades after exposure to traumatic events.
- Symptoms of trauma emerging in older adulthood can be more extreme than previously experienced.

*Center on Aging and Trauma (2020). Aging and Trauma. Factsheet. https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-42/2/AgingAndTrauma_FactSheet_CenterOnAgingAndTrauma%25281%2529.pdf*
Trauma Triggers

What is a Trauma Trigger?

A stimulus that prompts traumatic response and includes sound, smell, touch, sight, taste, feeling, or circumstance that reminds an individual of a past trauma. Once experienced, triggers can elicit a fight, flight, or freeze response in the body.

- Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa Holders
  - Fireworks

- Holocaust Survivors
  - Medical Procedures

- War Refugees and Asylees
  - Political Unrest
Introduction to Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Care
Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Care

Holistic approach to service delivery that promotes trust, dignity, strength, and empowerment of all individuals by incorporating knowledge about trauma into agency programs, policies, and procedures.*

Trauma-informed care is grounded in six principles:

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

* Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2014) SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA), 14-4884.
Examples of Trauma-Informed Practice
Providing PCTI Care to Older Adults

PCTI Services

- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Cognitive Health
- COVID-19 Relief
- Socialization
- Education and Training
- Legal Assistance
- Technology
- Accessibility
- Cash Assistance
Promising Practices in Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Care For Older Refugees
Refugee Program for Older Adults
Services for Older Refugees

Refugee Program for Older Adults provides short term case management for refugees who are 60+ and in the country for 2-5 years.

- Access to senior community centers, supportive services, and intergenerational activities
- Nutrition services and meals delivered to homebound clients
- Transportation services
- Interpretation and translation
- Citizenship and naturalization services
- Elder abuse prevention
- Nursing home ombudsman services
- Home care, adult day care, and respite care
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- More services…
A Story of an Older Refugee
Learning to Shape Services

1. Identity
2. Pictures on walls and outreach materials
3. Explain expectations
4. Provide cultural orientation
5. Ask THEM
Socialization Programs for Older Refugees
## Additional Programs

### Programs coming soon:

1. The Senior Companion Program
2. Family caregiver – 101 class of resources, how to communicate w/ fam member, etc.
3. Food – deliver boxes and recipe swap

### Services in the works:

1. Additional home care/adult day care/respite services
2. A volunteer program specific to the refugee program
3. Additional community gardens
4. iPad tablets for virtual gathering, learning English, participation in Citizenship classes, and to participate with virtual Senior Centers
Challenges and Needs

- Childcare
- Receive citizenship within the first 7 years they are in the US
- Housing
- Food
- Language barriers
- Transportation
- Understanding processes
- Purpose
- Quiet and stability, no chaos
# Trauma Triggers

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Older Refugees</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dogs and animals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loud noises (ex. firecrackers, sirens)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not smiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observing staff being impatient to others</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Advice to Resettlement Agencies

1. Develop relationship with AAA (Area Agency on Aging) and possible solutions

2. Develop relationship with Senior Centers

3. Provide opportunities for refugees to give back

4. Connect older adults with multiple programs
Q&A
Next Steps

1. Webinar follow-up questionnaire
2. Apply for a grant (next RFP - Spring 2021)
3. Write to us to learn more about future webinars and collaboration opportunities
4. Participate in the National Survey on PCTI Care
5. Strategize on how you and your organization can be more PCTI
Sources and Further Reading


2. Center on Aging and Trauma (2020). Aging and Trauma. Factsheet. [https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-42/2/AgingAndTrauma_FactSheet_CenterOnAgingAndTrauma%25281%2529.pdf](https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-42/2/AgingAndTrauma_FactSheet_CenterOnAgingAndTrauma%25281%2529.pdf)

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Thank you for listening!
For more information, contact us:

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