

Social Work and War: Glocal Collaboration in Practice and Education on Supporting  
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**Forced relocation – pathological and salutogenic points of view**

**Prof. Orit Nuttman-Shwartz,  
Sapir College, Israel  
IASSW board member, Israeli representative**



# Forced relocation

- Forced relocation means involuntarily moving a population from familiar surroundings to a new environment, usually due to changes in borders, war, or natural disasters.
- The displaced has no choice or control over the situation (Dekel & Tuval-Mashiach, 2010; Hall et al. 2008; Nuttman-Shwartz, 2008).
- The move usually involves an overall change in living conditions, such as place of residence, workplace, and social life, which can affect the mental and physical health of individuals (Ryff and Essex, 1992).
- As such it has been recognized as an uprooting experience which entails extensive losses and also considered as a complex traumatic event (Dekel & Tuval-Mashiach, 2010; Hernandez & McGoldrick, 1998; Lee et al., 2021).

# Forced relocation: Pathological (negative) point of view

Research findings have revealed a diverse range of emotional and psychological responses to forced relocation, including pain, mourning, anger, anxiety, adjustment difficulties, depression, marital and family problems, loss of confidence in one's achievements and abilities, and a sense of uncertainty about the future (Brown and Perkins 1992; David et al. 1996; Nuttman-Shwartz et al., 2010).

# Forced relocation: Salutogenic (positive) point of view

- A small fraction of research on forced relocation based on salutogenic – positive approach (Galilli & Sagy, 2010).
- This approach emphasizes the personal and social resources in dealing with new and even adverse situations.
- It also highlights the ability of the individual and the environment to function, even in distress situations and return to routine and to a normative manner when the danger passes (Sagy, 2015).
- Research findings showed that the majority of the population show resistance, resilience and growth despite being exposed to difficult and even extreme traumatic events (Bonanno et al., 2015; Gatt et al., 2020; Masten, 2021; Nuttman-Shwartz, 2019).

# The social work role: Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

Macro - Changing global and local policy  
& promoting peace – IASSW HR & Social  
Justice committee



Meso - Working with the hosting  
community



Micro - Working with the displaced and  
refugees

# The social work role (Macro & Meso levels)

- Based on the global agenda, social works should play an important role in providing for the needs of oppressed and vulnerable populations, including displaced persons, migrants, and asylum seekers (Becerra, 2016).
- Social workers should advocate policy changes to promote equality, justice and solidarity.
- Community development workers need to create welcoming, safe and inclusive neighborhoods and communities, where local residents and displaced can co-create a sense of belonging and connection (Drolet et al., 2018; Nuttman-Shwartz & Shinar-Levanon, 2019).

# The social work role (Micro level)

Assessing acute and long-term trauma responses and alleviate the plight of displaced who have experienced trauma, mourning and loss, and in aiming to bolster their resilience and ability to tackle their problems.

# Practice examples - 1





# Group Art based therapy : Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

- Three sessions with 10 children aged 10-11
  - (1) The mesosystem - Creating a neighborhood model – aim to enforce social connections and increase their familiarity with their new environment and mutual relations.
  - (2) The microsystem - Creating a personal area (their rooms) – aim to find an individual (private) “safe place” – strengthening their own identity.
  - (3) Trauma work - Drawing their past; present and future house aim to create continuity.

# Practice example - 2



# Training displaced professionals: STAIR trauma education

## Step 1

- Managing the stress
- Connecting to emotions
- Coping skills - such as breathing exercises

## Step 2

- Identification and organization feelings of distress
- Ways of coping – body manifestation of the distress

## Step 3

- Emotional health management
- Relaxation exercises

# Training displaced professionals: STAIR trauma education (2)

## Step 4

- Positive activities and positive behaviors
- Mapping achievements
- Managing healthy and relaxing emotional responses

## Step 5

- Strengthening positive thoughts
- Managing healthy and relaxing emotional responses

## Step 6

- Locating and using personal skills
- What works for you?
- How can you use these skills in order to manage a future event?
- How can you use these skills to help others?

# Key rules and principals

- Avoiding talking about the past trauma.
- References to somatization responses is essential, as it was found to be prevalent behavioral responses.
- Translation to the local (migrants) cultural language (cultural trauma, relevant images).
- Semi - Professional interventions using poetry, dancing; movement, ventilation and sharing knowledge.

# Summary and conclusions

- Social workers need to encourage self-determination and empowerment for displaced person and allowing them to develop their own leaderships (Trevithick, 2012)
- Social workers need to adopt a cross-cultural contextual engagement that reflects both individual trauma and international human rights (Nelson et al., 2014; Nickerson et al., 2017).
- There is a need to develop programs aimed at breaking the social barriers between local citizens and the community of displaced people, in an attempt to minimize discrimination, radicalization; social gaps and animosity (Nuttman-Shwartz & Shinar-Levanon, 2019).
- Social work educators need to develop educational programs to educate social workers to work with displaced people, and to consider that they would probably like to return to their country of origin once the war will end (Nuttman-Shwartz & Shinar-Levanon, 2019).

# THANK YOU

[orits@sapir.ac.il](mailto:orits@sapir.ac.il)

