**Introduction to the Module**

Funding for the development of these materials was provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford over a two-year period (1998–9). A further grant facilitated a review of the material in refugee settings in different parts of the world. The result was the production of this 30-hour psychosocial training module and associated resources to facilitate the training of humanitarian assistance workers in response to the psychosocial needs of refugees. The module is targeting the development of critical competences in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of psychosocial programmes. Specifically, on completion of the module, the aim is that participants:

- will demonstrate awareness of the nature of the threat to personal and social wellbeing posed by conflict and forced migration
- will be capable of conceptualizing psychosocial needs — and interventions — with respect to relevant psychiatric, psychological, social, and cultural frameworks
- will identify the roles of culture and identity in shaping the experience of conflict and forced migration
- will be familiar with a variety of examples of psychosocial intervention with war-affected and forced migrant populations
- will demonstrate the capacity for critical appraisal of psychosocial programmes with respect to both goals and methods
- will be capable of planning a psychosocial intervention sensitive to local circumstance
- will be able to defend any planned intervention with respect to established principles of good practice
- will demonstrate awareness of principles for the effective evaluation of psychosocial programmes.

**Contents of the Module**

The material of the module is in a variety of forms including a lecture, discussion guides, briefer discussion papers, a list of readings with commentary, as well as training manuals and an interactive activity. This material should add up to approximately 30 hours of activity. There are choices within the material. The table on p. 2 provides a recommended sequence for following the module. However, each component of the module can be read independently. For your guidance, we have indicated the approximate time required for each component.

**Video Lecture and Transcript** (1.5 hrs)

Towards an understanding of psychosocial responses to forced migration

Alastair Ager

- Introductory case study
- Framework for consideration of the ‘Refugee Experience’
- The growth of psychosocial programming
- Current theoretical perspectives
- Key insights/Issues.

**Discussion Guides**

The nature of conflict and the implications for appropriate psychosocial responses (3 hrs)

Derek Summerfield

- An epidemiology of war
- The collective experience of war
- The social construct of traumatic events
- Assumptions behind psychological trauma programmes
- Issues of evaluation
- Humanitarian interventions
- Principles for intervention.

Gender and forced migration (3 hrs)

Mary Diaz

- Gender and forced migration
- The situation for women
- The situation for girls
- Education
- Health
- Reproductive health
- Sexual violence
### Table 1: Suggested sequence of module material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Overview lecture (1.5 hrs)</th>
<th>3. Gender and forced migration–discussion guide (3 hrs)</th>
<th>5. Cross-cultural game (2 hrs)</th>
<th>7. Approaches to community participation or communication skills—training manuals (12 hrs)</th>
<th>9. Approaches to community participation or communication skills (cont.)</th>
<th>11. Dominant paradigms and approaches (1.5 hrs)</th>
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<td></td>
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</table>

- Mental health
- Income generation
- Western responses to forced migration
- Women’s participation and empowerment
- Policy and practice
- Programme interventions.

### Understanding the psychosocial needs of children and adolescents (3 hrs)

Maggie McCallin

- Child development and child rights
- Critical issues
  - separation
  - exploitation
  - child soldiers
  - reproductive health
  - international standards
  - education.

### Non-western concepts of mental health (3 hrs)

Alcinda Honwana

- Culture and mental health
- Non-western concepts of mental health
- Case studies.

### Responses and comments (2 hrs)

- The problem of the wool: A response. Inger Agger
- The politics of culture and suffering. Jadranka Mimica
- Uses and abuses of the concept of trauma: A response to Summerfield. Kaz de Jong
- Gender issues in Sri Lanka. Jeevan Thiagarajah and Eshani Ruwanpura
- Vindicating masculinity: The paradoxical effects of empowering women in a refugee camp. Simon Turner
Discussion papers

Dominant psychological paradigms in refugee literature and humanitarian interventions (1.5 hrs)
Maryanne Loughry

- Psychological paradigms in forced migration literature and practice
- Psychological interventions
- Psychiatric interventions
- Psychosocial responses.

Programming and evaluation for psychosocial programmes (1.5 hrs)
Alastair Ager

- Assessment methodologies
- Interconnectedness of sociocultural, psychological, economic and political dimensions
- Assistance based on partnership
- Commitment to research and evaluation.

Training manuals

Community participation (12 hrs)
Eva Segerström

- The experience of community participation
- What is community participation?
- Promoting of community participation
- Identifying resources
- Mobilization and capacity building
- Community participation and vulnerable groups
- Youth and child participation.

Communication and helping skills for humanitarian workers (12 hrs)
Colin MacMullin

- Communication and counselling
- Attending and listening
- Listening and responding
- Assertiveness
- Problem solving
- Resolving interpersonal conflicts
- Working with groups.

Readings commentary

Readings commentary
Alastair Ager

- Dominant paradigms in forced migration
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Humanitarian assistance
- Psychosocial assistance
- Children
- The nature of conflict.

Interactive activity (3 hrs)

Cross-cultural simulation game (optional)

Appendices

- List of acronyms
- Glossary of terms
- Updated bibliography
- Recommended further reading.

Conventions used in this manual

Throughout the manual the ‘facilitator’s voice’ invites you to pause and reflect on what you have been reading and how it relates to your own experience.

✍ The facilitator’s voice is displayed in this font and is distinguished from the surrounding text by two rules.

When you see the following symbol we invite you to jot down your reflections and share these with others who are also working the module.

🔍
THE AUTHOR
This guide has been written by Karen Walker, an expert in adult education. It is designed to assist facilitators in using the module materials as efficiently as possible and is aimed at adults who are working as group facilitators on the module The Refugee Experience. It has been written for people with no formal background in teaching or adult education. Its intention is to equip group facilitators for their role by providing material useful and relevant to working with groups of adults on material on which no one participating is an expert. In this guide Karen assists the facilitator to:

- consider how best to approach adult learners
- structure teaching of the module’s materials over a week, a series of weekends, or over a long weekend
- use the discussion guides in group learning settings.

kwalker@anu.adelaide.edu.au

CONTENTS
1. The group facilitator’s role
2. Adults as learners
3. Facilitator skills and knowledge
   3.1. The concept of ‘emotional climate’ within groups
   3.2. Basic listening and responding skills
   3.3. Working with groups
   3.4. Dealing effectively with conflict
4. Course structure: suggested sequences
5. Facilitator notes
   5.1. Discussion guide: The nature of conflict and the implications for appropriate psychosocial responses
   5.2. Discussion guide: Gender and forced migration
   5.3. Discussion guide: Understanding the psychosocial needs of refugee children and adolescents
   5.4. Discussion guide: Non-western concepts of mental health

1. THE GROUP FACILITATOR’S ROLE
A group facilitator has several roles:

- To provide a structure to the group learning experience
- To assist the group to develop and maintain an emotional climate that is conducive to adult learning
- To encourage individual learners to engage in self-exploration through example
- To assist the group in resolving inter-group conflict
- To assist the group in providing emotional support to individuals experiencing intrapersonal conflict
- To model an openness to shared learning through appropriate self disclosure and non-defensive communication.

2. ADULTS AS LEARNERS
By taking time to reflect how you, the facilitator, learn new ideas and concepts and experience a shift in your values you will gain insight into how other adults learn.

♦ How do you prefer to learn new material and ideas?
♦ Do you take time out to sit and think through new material?
♦ Do you discuss what you are learning with others and reflect on the comments of others as a means of clarifying your own position?
♦ Do you take time to write a journal and explore new ideas through a reflective written approach? Do you let new ideas sit in the back of your mind and revisit them at different times to reconsider and reflect?
♦ Do you do some, a few, or all of these things?

Adults will use some styles of learning in preference to others. A significant difference between children learning and adult learning centres around
experience. Whilst children are traditionally told what to learn, adults view learning as a developmental task within the context of a social role. Children tend to be subject centred while adults are performance centred. Adults need to see why they are learning something, there needs to be a purpose for the knowledge, it needs to have some applicability to their work/personal life. Facilitators of adult learners need to be aware they are not working with a grown-up child.

Adults derive self-concept from experience, or from what they have done. As they accumulate more experience, they transform it into the personal value system, reinforcing the self-concept. The adult thus approaches new experience with what we popularly call prejudice but what is actually an organized set of feelings and descriptions about himself and about what he expects the experience to yield. (Burnham, 1983)

The material presented in this module is seeking to raise awareness of a number of issues of significance to those working in the field as humanitarian care workers. It presents material that may challenge some of the present values and ideas held by the learner. It might be found to be confrontational by some; they may feel that their personal values and ideas are under challenge. It might be viewed with trepidation by others; they may understand the concepts and see their value, but may nevertheless be experiencing resistance to change along with the accompanying emotional responses. Others still may find the material and concepts exciting, and embrace them easily and with minimal resistance. Learning involves both the mind and the heart, both the intellect and the emotions. It is unwise to view learning simply as an intellectual exercise. The stories told in this module, for example, provide information that can be used to shape future programmes. The stories told in this module also have the real potential to engage the reader’s emotions as well as the mind. It is a wise learner and facilitator who allows time for emotional responses to be processed along with, and sometimes before, the intellectual material.

3. FACILITATOR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

3.1. The concept of ‘emotional climate’ within groups

By being aware of the possible range of emotional responses by group members, as a group facilitator you can be more skilful in your interactions with the group. An understanding of group emotions can also provide you with the skills to work with the group on developing and maintaining an emotional climate that is accepting of various individual responses to the material under study.

Group emotional climates significantly influence the effectiveness of the group. If you have been a part of a group with constant internal power struggles or in which some of the group members were constantly in conflict, you will recall how the group’s effectiveness was reduced. If you recall an effective group you have belonged to, some of its features would include; having a common purpose, high group cohesiveness, and effective mechanisms for dealing with conflict. A group that is able to recognize conflict within itself and to deal constructively with the conflict is a high-functioning group.

The life stage of the group is another factor that can affect its emotional climate. (Further reading: Johnson, & Johnson, 1994.) Understanding a theory of the stages in a group’s life – in this case, the forming, storming, norming, and performing model – can greatly assist a group facilitator. Using the model proposed by Johnson and Johnson, a group facilitator can better understand the internal dynamics of their group if, for example, the group is approaching the end of its time together and appears to be functioning with less energy than hitherto.

3.2. Basic listening and responding skills

As a group facilitator you will be seeking to (1) actively listen to members of the group; and (2) model active listening to the group. Much of the group’s activities will be based around verbal exchanges. Knowing how to listen is fundamental to successful facilitation.

Chapter 3 of the Communication and counselling skills training manual in Volume II needs to be read and the final three activities attempted.
3.3. Working with groups
Your work as a facilitator will primarily be with groups of adults who are or will be working in the area of humanitarian aid work. They may or may not have an understanding of the dynamics that exist within a group. For effective learning interactions to occur within a group setting a basic understanding of how groups work and some of the possible barriers to effective group functioning will equip a facilitator for their role.

Begin by reflecting on your own interaction style within group settings.

♦ What is your preferred style of interaction?
♦ Take time to observe a group you are a member of and attempt to identify some of the leadership style behaviours that people display.
♦ What is your leadership style?
♦ Can you recognize hidden agendas at work around you?
♦ Write a little on your reflections on hidden agendas and groups.

(Further reading: Eunson, 1994.)

3.4. Dealing effectively with conflict
As a group facilitator you may find yourself needing to be skilled in dealing with conflict in a group setting. Conflict can occur on a number of levels. There can be conflict within a person (i.e. intrapersonal conflict); there can be conflict between people (i.e. interpersonal conflict); and there can be conflict between groups of people (i.e. inter-group conflict). This particular module of study may give rise to some intrapersonal conflict for some, who may interpret the material as a challenge to ideas and values they hold dear. Conflict may also arise within the group between individuals. A facilitator has a responsibility for assisting the group to recognize and work through such situations. Understanding causes of conflict and providing alternative ways of working through differences between individuals powerfully equip the group.

Conflict is a daily part of human existence. As individuals we have developed various ways of dealing with conflict. Some of our approaches were learned as children as we observed adults in their interactions. We have developed other strategies through trial and error, or adopted them because we have seen the strategy used effectively by another person.

An essential method of beginning to understand ways of dealing constructively with conflict is to have some understanding of your own approach to conflict situations. Having an understanding of the range of possible behaviours used by people experiencing conflict can better enable you, the facilitator, to assist the group in constructively dealing with a situation of inter-group conflict. As a group facilitator a most valuable strategy you can develop is learning to recognize early any conflict/tension within the group and bring your observations to the group’s attention with a view to finding a mutually acceptable way of resolving the tension. Avoid pointing out individuals, but rather reflect to the group that your observations about the emotional climate can reduce the likelihood of an individual feeling singled out and can assist the whole group to recognize its responsibility to the group and the group’s functioning. (Further reading: Bolton, 1986.)

◆ Describe a situation of conflict you have observed or been a part of that was handled well.
◆ What were the characteristics that made that particular event stand out in your mind?

4. Course Structure: Suggested Sequences
The module has been structured to fit within a 30-hour timeframe (see Table 1, p. 2). It is envisaged that those working on the material on their own
will be able to complete the readings and activities within the readings in the given timeframe. Those working in groups will have the benefit of group interactions and activities as they reflect on the material offered in the various components. The module is designed for linear use. The enrichment material in the Book of Readings (in Volume III) is not included within the 30-hour module structure; the readings do however complement the central discussion papers, and can be used in the group work to provide material for discussion and consideration.

The linear progression of the material, i.e. the order in which the material can be used, is recommended. The sequences are designed to allow the student to move from an understanding of a theoretical framework to a consideration of the practical working out of the ideas. What is flexible in the module, however, is the intensity with which the material is considered. The module can be covered, for example, over a long weekend (see Table 2).

The timetable shown in Table 2 enables the module to be covered in just over three days. Holding the first session in the evening at the beginning of the three-day block helps participants to gain a sense of the direction of the module, its scope and emphasis. Day 2 is by far the longest day. Making use of the interactive cross-cultural game in the final time slot of Day 2 enables participants to become physically as well as intellectually involved and should be an effective end to a day of intense input. Day 3 involves working with material from the final discussion guide and beginning work on the training manual. Day 4 completes the training manuals and the final readings.

The module can also be completed using two two-day periods to cover the material (see Table 3).

The mode module can be covered over an even longer period time: for example, over a month, putting aside one day a week to consider the material. The important factor in the final structure that you choose is that the sequence of the material as outlined in Table 1 is maintained over whatever timeframe is finally adopted for completion of the module.

5. Facilitator Notes

The following notes are for facilitators working with groups of adult learners on the material in the four discussion guides. The assumption underlying this material is that the appropriate discussion guide has been read prior to the group meeting, that the exercises within each chapter have been attempted, and that the relevant discussion guide has been brought to the group discussion.

At the beginning of the module, provide the group with time for an opportunity to listen to one another and learn where each participant has come from, what area of humanitarian work they are or will be working in, their family connections, etc. Some activities designed to assist group members become familiar with each other include asking group members to work in pairs, getting them to interview each other to learn a little about their lives, and then inviting them to introduce each other to the whole group using some of the information they have learnt about their partner. Alternatively, ask each person in the group to introduce themselves and give some (non-threatening) details about themselves, for example their favourite food, favourite music, favourite place to holiday, favourite historical figure and so on. (Remember to include yourself in the activity.) Use the introductory time also to outline the format the group sessions will take, your role as the group facilitator, who will be doing what, where, when, and so on. Don’t forget some of the basic essentials such as where the toilets are, when the coffee/cigarette breaks will be, and what time each session/day will commence and end. Remember check discreetly if there are any specific needs that you should be aware of – for example, someone with a bad back who is unable to sit for lengthy periods of time, or someone with a hearing disability who needs to sit close to people who are speaking.

5.1. Discussion guide: The nature of conflict and the implications for appropriate psychosocial responses

There are two basic ways to work with your group: (1) breaking into smaller groups that focus on a task and then reform into the larger group to share their findings; or (2) working together as a whole group.
on the tasks. Be aware that there will be less time for individual contributions and reflection using a large-group approach.

Group discussions (choose from the following):
1. In small groups of approximately four to five, discuss the six basic themes evident in violent conflict outlined in the paper. The group’s tasks are to: discuss the six basic themes in the light of their own experiences as workers amongst survivors of conflict; prepare and present to the larger group examples from amongst the experiences of its members. 
   
   *(Approx. 45 minutes small-group activity; approx. 60 minutes large-group activity.)*

2. Assign different positions to different groups: get one-third to argue for the Summerfield position, i.e. that psychological interventions are inappropriate, irrelevant and ineffective; the other third to argue the opposite, i.e. that there

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*Table 2: Suggested sequence for the module using a long weekend approach*
is a role for them and they can be effective. The task of the last group is to reflect the key issues back to the groups and offer a position they deem appropriate. Get the groups to think of a project that illustrates their position in relation to the debate. 

(Approx. 45 minutes for small-group preparation; approx. 45 minutes for whole-group participation.)

3. Summerfield discusses seven assumptions about trauma. These are: (1) experiences of war and atrocity are so extreme and distinctive that they do not just cause suffering, they cause ‘traumatization’; (2) there is a basic universal human response to highly stressful events captured by western psychological frameworks; (3) large numbers of victims traumatized by war need professional help; (4) western psychological approaches are relevant to violent conflict worldwide – victims do better if they emotionally ventilate and ‘work through’ their experiences; (5) there are vulnerable groups and individuals who need to be specifically targeted for psychological help; (6) wars represent a mental-health emergency – rapid intervention can prevent the development of serious mental problems, as well as subsequent violence and wars; (7) local workers are overwhelmed and

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Table 3: Suggested sequence for the module using two sets of two days
may themselves be traumatized. In small groups of two to three, the participants choose one of the assumptions and prepare a brief defence and prosecution of that assumption to be presented to the whole group.

(Approx. 2 hours for this activity: 1 hour in small groups; 1 hour for whole-group participation.)

4. ‘What are the time-honoured coping patterns mobilized during crises in a particular society, and what happens when these too are engulfed by a conflict?’ In small groups discuss the coping patterns of groups known to the various participants. How do they cope? What are some of the different mechanisms used by various communities to cope with crises? (This can also be a large-group activity.)

♦ As the group facilitator, take opportunities to encourage members of the group to articulate their personal position on these, as on all other, discussion topics and stimulate critical discussion on these issues.

♦ It is not necessary to come to conclusions. Instead aim to raise awareness of a need for critical consideration of the ideas presented.

♦ Be prepared to move between the small groups, encouraging discussion of the topic and, where appropriate, contributing your own responses to the task the small group is focusing on.

♦ If the group needs more time to process an idea/topic, be prepared to modify your schedule to allow the space required. It is preferable to allow more time for consideration of ideas/points of view than to push on to the next topic with unfinished business. Adults appreciate this respect. Remember that adults view learning as a developmental task within the context of a social role, and demonstrating sensitivity to their needs is seen as a demonstration of respect for them.

5.2. Discussion guide: Gender and forced migration

Group discussions/activities (choose from the following):

1. In small groups of three to five share your emotional responses to the stories told of the experiences of Rwandan, Kurd, and Somali women and girls in the Introduction section of this guide. Discuss other examples of gender ‘blindness’ in humanitarian settings known to members of the group. Provide opportunity for these stories to be shared with the large group.

(Approx. 45 minutes for the small-group discussions; 30 minutes for the large-group sharing of stories.)

2. In small groups of three to five develop a presentation that could be used to highlight the issues of gender and forced migration to new humanitarian fieldworkers, i.e. people with no field experience. Present an outline of the content and method of the presentation to the large group. The small groups are to provide a verbal critique of each others’ content.

(Approx. 1 hour for the small-group work; 1–2 hours for the presentations to the whole group and critiques.)

3. ‘Some aid workers argue that policies and programmes for women are a form of cultural imperialism, with the west imposing its values onto others.’ In small groups discuss your responses to the criticism of cultural imperialism. Are you comfortable with your response, your colleagues’ responses?

(Approx. 45 minutes to 1 hour for the small-group discussions. You may invite the small groups to share some of their discussion with the larger group.)

4. As small groups read the stories of programme interventions amongst the Bhutanese women in Nepal, the women in Rwanda and the women in Guatemala (p. 69), identify the key elements of these programmes. Prepare an outline of the key features necessary for gender-sensitive programmes. Present and briefly discuss the
5.3. Discussion guide: Understanding the psychosocial needs of refugee children and adolescents

Group discussions/activities (choose from the following):

1. In small groups of five to seven ask people to outline the situation of children and adolescents in the communities they are working in. What, if any, programs are they running for and with children. What types of programs are they? Are they effective (and who says so)? What problems arise in connection with these programs? Prepare a summary of the programs discussed and their effectiveness or otherwise for presentation to the large group.
   (Approx. 2 hours: 1 hour for the small-group activity; 1 hour for the large-group presentations.)

2. In small groups of five to seven ask participants to address the following: what are the different forms of care options for separated children? Which ones do you think are best? Why? Draft a paper outlining the alternatives in their order of priority. Defend your group’s list to the larger group.
   (Approx. 45 minutes for the small group activity and 45 minutes for the large group activity.)

3. ‘An issue that has received some attention amongst psychologists and psychiatrists is that of the resilience and vulnerability of children in situations of war. The dominant approach has been to focus on children as vulnerable and weak, and the negative consequences of war have been emphasized. Recent literature has sought to focus more on the capacities of children to be resilient and the factors that may contribute to resilience. One of the most important of these is the supportive environment of family and relatives; another is the meaning that children attach to the events. For example, if the consequences of war are seen as part of a struggle for liberation this may help to mediate

5.4. Discussion guide: Non-western concepts of mental health

Group discussions/activities (choose from the following):

1. In small groups of four to six, get participants to read the following sections of the discussion guide: 2.3, ‘The war and the spirits of the dead’, and 2.4, ‘The war and the performance of burial rituals’. The small groups should discuss the place of rituals in their own society’s view of illness and mental illness. What is their society’s understanding of ‘mental illness’, for example? Does it have a spiritual dimension? How does this view affect the treatment of the ‘mentally ill’?
   (Approx. 1 hour for small-group discussion.)

2. In small groups of four to six read section 3.1, ‘Case studies from Mozambique and Angola’. Those who have experience of observing a community ritual describe it to the group. How was it determined as being needed? Who were the key people in the ritual? What was the result of the ritual being completed? What was your response to what you observed?
   (At least 1 hour for the small-group discussions.)

3. Participants should work with two other group members on developing an orientation session for new fieldworkers on issues surrounding concepts of mental health. What are the essential issues that you would want to include in such an orientation session? Small groups should describe the focus and content of their session plan to the large group.
   (Approx. 2 hours: 1 hour for the small-group interactions; at least 1 hour for the large-group presentations.)
6. RESPONSES AND COMMENTS

Over the past two years the material in this module has been used in a variety of refugee settings around the world. We are grateful to the following people who have assisted in the piloting of the module: Manuel Carballo, Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, Kaz de Jong, MSF-Holland, Myriam Houtart, UNHCR, Sumaiya Khair and Tasneem Siddiqui, RMMRU, Bangladesh, Zonke Majodina, Forced Migration Programme, University of Witwatersrand, Janet Nambi, Makerere University, Nancy Peterson, American University in Cairo, and Sarah Samson, International Rescue Committee. In the light of their feedback we have revised the module. In particular, we have incorporated a number of responses and comments on the discussion guides. We invite you to consider the discussion guides in the module and then to turn to the Responses and Comments section to see how others have responded.

- The problem of the wool: A response. Inger Agger
- The politics of culture and suffering. Jadranka Mimica
- Uses and abuses of the concept of trauma: A response to Summerfield. Kaz de Jong

Drs Inger Agger and Jadranka Mimica have reflected on the differing approaches taken by agencies and practitioners to psychosocial programming. Kaz de Jong comments in particular on the MSF-Holland approach.

- Gender issues in Sri Lanka. Jeevan Thiagarajah and Eshani Ruwanpura
- Vindicating masculinity: The paradoxical effects of empowering women in a refugee camp. Simon Turner

Jeevan Thiagarajah and Eshani Ruwanpura consider the applicability of gender-sensitive programmes in a country like Sri Lanka. Simon Turner’s paper, which was previously published in Forced Migration Review (December 2000), challenges the efficacy of gender-sensitive programmes that focus only on women.

FURTHER READING


