Prevention strategies for children and caregivers affected by war

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Families are in the front line of defence for children’s mental health

- Primary caregiver - can be a ‘protective shield”
- Family interaction predictive of children’s adjustment in military conflict settings
- Significant lack of family skills programmes in these contexts
What do families need during extreme stress?

Resources that aim to strengthen family protective factors; communication, trust, problem-solving skills and conflict resolution

• How to deal with stress
• Listening to children and talking
• The value of using both love and limits
• How to encourage good behaviour and discourage misbehaviour
• Focus on relationships
• Opportunities to play
Qualitative Exploration of the Challenges of Parenting Children in War and Displacement Contexts

Recruitment areas: Three refugee camps in Syria and Turkey

Method: Interviews and focus groups

Sample: n=27 (caregivers and aid workers)

Identified: Environmental, child and parent-specific challenges


A FAMILY MULTI-LEVEL PARENTING AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT DELIVERY MODEL FOR FAMILIES LIVING THROUGH CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT

- Level 1: Brief parenting advice
- Level 2: More detailed parenting advice
- Level 3: Broader focus interactive sessions
- Level 4: Intensive family interventions

- TRT+ Parenting Programme
- Strong Families Programme
- Parent Booklets + Conversation group
- Leaflets providing basic parenting information
3000 leaflets distributed in 2 days

59.5% return rate on questionnaires

78.5% rated leaflet usefulness as “quite a lot” or “a great deal”

El-Khani et al (2016) Global Mental Health
Booklet and Conversation Group: ‘Caring for Children through Conflict and Displacement’

- No extensive training - for low resource settings
- 119 caregivers in Nablus
- Open access

El-Khani, Maalouf, et al., 2019. Caregiving for Children through Conflict and Displacement; A pilot study testing the feasibility of delivering and evaluating a light touch parenting intervention for caregivers in the West Bank. *Journal of International Psychology*. 
• For settings where families are under stress
• Brief
• Evidence-informed
• Suitable for low resource settings
• Open source (available to everyone without need to pay royalty or copyright fees)
• Cost effective
• Used in 20 countries so far
Strong Families: (SF) Change in Total Strengths and Difficulties scores for children in the very high or high category in Afghanistan (n=41) and in refugee reception centers in Serbia (n=9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time 1 (before SF)</th>
<th>Time 2 (2 weeks after SF)</th>
<th>Time 3 (6 weeks after SF)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghans in Afghanistan</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>16.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afghans in refugee reception centers in Serbia</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDQ SCORES</td>
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<tr>
<td>VERY HIGH</td>
<td>20-40pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>17-19pts</td>
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<td>SLIGHTLY RAISED</td>
<td>14-16pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLOSE TO AVG.</td>
<td>0-13pts</td>
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Teaching Recovery Techniques plus Parenting (TRT+)

A child trauma recovery programme enhanced with caregiver sessions for children experiencing post-traumatic stress.
TRT Plus Parenting

Original programme:
Teaching Recovery Techniques (TRT)
5 child sessions and 2 parent sessions

Enhanced programme:
Teaching Recovery Techniques plus Parenting (TRT+)
5 children sessions and 5 parent sessions

RCT in Lebanon
Enhanced, significant improvements for both children and caregivers across a range of measures with the Plus Parenting component, including parental depression, anxiety and stress

With particular thanks to all the families, facilitators, and humanitarian workers and translators who have helped with the development and implementation of resources, and with these studies.

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