

SCALING UP PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS WITH SYRIAN REFUGEES (STRENGTHS PROJECT)

RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

10th June | Vrije Universiteit | Amsterdam



Chair: Sahar Shirzad

Sahar Shirzad is a human rights activist, writer, programme maker, moderator, and founder of the concept programme "The Refugee Millennial".

Speakers

Marit Sijbrandij

Marit Sijbrandij is Professor of Clinical Psychology at the Department of Clinical, Neuro- and Developmental Psychology at VU University [Vrije Universiteit], Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and Director of the WHO Collaborating Center at VU University. She is coordinator of the EU H2020 STRENGTHS project. In addition, she coordinates the recently funded EU H2020 RESPOND project, that is aimed at evaluating remotely delivered stepped care programs to improve wellbeing and reduce psychological distress among individuals affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. Her areas of research are prevention, (early) interventions and public mental health interventions for mental disorders in populations exposed to trauma and adversities, including refugee populations and populations in low- and middle-income countries.



Mark van Ommeren

Mark van Ommeren, PhD, is Head of the Mental Health Unit within the WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Use. The Unit covers a wide range of topics including care of mental disorders across the life course, innovation and research in psychological interventions, suicide prevention, mental health in specific settings (e.g., the workplace, humanitarian emergencies), and epidemiology. Much of his work has focused on initiating and developing inter-agency mental health policy for humanitarian settings (eg Sphere standard, IASC guidelines) with linked implementation tools; developing, testing and disseminating a range of scalable psychological interventions; and "building back better" mental health services across different levels of the health system after major emergencies. In 2005 Mark introduced the term "mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)" to reduce inter-agency fragmentation and facilitate intersectoral collaboration in this area of work.



Richard Bryant

Richard Bryant is a Scientia Professor of Psychology at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. Professor Bryant has researched the nature, course, and treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for over 25 years. His work has identified key genetic, neural, and psychological factors underpinning PTSD and grief. Through many longitudinal studies he has developed the world's leading screening tools for early identification of PTSD as well as development of the most commonly used early treatment protocols. These have been translated into over 15 languages and used in many countries. He has conducted many trials of psychological interventions for assisting people adapt to trauma and adversity. In collaboration with the WHO, he has co-authored a range of scalable interventions and tested these in multiple trials across the world. He has written 6 books, 80 book chapters, and 700 journal articles. He has served on major international committees to define PTSD internationally.





Mark Jordans

Mark Jordans, PhD, is Professor Child and Adolescent Global Mental Health at the Amsterdam Institute of Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam and Professor of Child and Adolescent Global Mental Health at the Center for Global Mental Health, King's College London. He is a child psychologist and works as Director of Research & Development for the NGO War Child in the Netherlands. His research interests are the development, implementation and evaluation of psychosocial and mental health care systems in low and middle income countries, especially for children in adversities and in fragile states. He is an advisor to several global mental health initiatives, including several WHO Expert Committees. He was a commissioner for the Lancet Commission Report on Global Mental Health.

Felicity Brown

Dr Felicity Brown, is a researcher and clinical psychologist with a background in developing and evaluating psychological interventions for children, adults and families affected by armed conflict, poverty, and other adversities. She is currently Senior Researcher in War Child Holland's R&D Department, a role in which she has led research projects in mental health and psychosocial support, and education, in Sudan, Lebanon, and Jordan. Dr Brown completed her clinical psychology and doctoral research training in Brisbane Australia, followed by a post-doctoral fellowship in the Research Program on Children and Global Adversity, at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, where she worked on interventions for youth and families living in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Boston. She has previously worked as a consultant for the World Health Organization contributing to the development and evaluation of a self-help programme for South Sudanese refugee women in Northern Uganda, a caregiver skills.



Anne de Graaff

Anne de Graaff is a PhD candidate in Clinical Psychology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. As part of her PhD, she coordinated two randomized controlled trials on Problem Management Plus (PM+) among Syrian refugees in the Netherlands. Anne has also been involved in several other research projects on refugee mental health.

Ceren Acartürk

Dr. Ceren Acartürk is a faculty member at the Department of Psychology, and an executive council member at Migration Research Center (MiReKoc) in Koç University. Her research mainly focuses on common mental health disorders following trauma, refugee mental health, and the investigation of the effectiveness of psychological interventions. Dr. Acartürk coordinated RCTs to test the effectiveness of scalable psychological interventions among adult refugees in Turkey. In addition, she is currently involved in a research study to investigate whether online peer supervision can support the wellbeing of mental health workers in displaced populations. She aims to contribute to the development of strategies to reduce the treatment gap, especially for vulnerable populations who were affected by adverse events.



Naser Morina

Dr Naser Morina, PhD, is a Senior Researcher/Lecturer at the University of Zürich, and Head of Research and Co-Head of the Outpatient Unit for Victims of Torture and War, University Hospital Zürich. Naser is specializing in global mental health, traumatic stress and psychotraumatology in general. His specific research expertise focuses on various aspects of traumatic stress and trauma-related disorders in vulnerable people, such as migrants, refugees, and stressed health care workers. His research theme is wide-ranging, including understanding the underlying mechanisms and development and implementation of new scalable psychological interventions where he is currently the Principal Investigator of several projects and RCTs.





Bayard Roberts

Bayard Roberts is Professor of Health Systems and Policy at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Bayard has a public health background, much of it related to armed conflict, forced migration and mental health. He has led a large number of research studies on humanitarian health responses, including as co-investigator/work package lead on STRENGTHS. He jointly led the 2017 Lancet series on health in humanitarian crises, was Co-Editor-in-Chief of the journal Conflict and Health from 2010 to 2020, and is Guest Editor for a special issue on the health of internally displaced persons in the Journal of Migration and Health.

David McDaid

David McDaid is Associate Professor in Health Policy and Health Economics at the Care Policy and Evaluation Centre at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He has more than 25 years of research experience on different aspects of the economics and policy of mental health and public health. He has advised bodies such as WHO, OECD, UNICEF and European Commission, as well as national governments on these issues. Much of his current work focuses on global mental and psychosocial health, including measures to promote better mental health and wellbeing, for the general population as well as groups such as refugees, help improve the life chances of young people, promote participation in employment, prevent self-harm and suicide and assess the potential long term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Peter Ventevogel

Peter Ventevogel, M.D., is a psychiatrist and a medical anthropologist with more than 19 years of working experience with refugees and people in complex humanitarian emergencies and post-conflict areas. He is the Senior Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Officer with UNHCR in Geneva, supporting the work of the field operations and head office with regards to mental health. He leads the Communication & Dissemination work package of the STRENGTHS project. Previously, he was an independent professional in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in post-conflict settings and regularly did consultancies for NGOs and UN agencies such as WHO and UNHCR. From 2008-2013 he was the editor-in-chief of Intervention, Journal for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Conflict Affected Areas. He has also worked with the NGO HealthNet TPO as a mental health advisor, as a psychiatrist at ARQ National Psychotrauma Centre, and he is involved in research and academic writing.

Pernille Hansen

Pernille Hansen is a psychologist working for the IFRC Psychosocial Centre as Technical Advisor on Community Mental Health Care. She has extensive experience with family and systemic therapy; community based psychosocial support and mental health care; research; developing and facilitating trainings; cultural adaptations of trainings and interventions; project development, management and review; and academic writing. She has a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Copenhagen, conducting research on children and family resilience in cross-cultural, post-disaster settings with field work in Dominican Republic and Haiti after the earthquake of 2010. Pernille has been a Master Trainer of PM+ in the STRENGTHS project and centrally involved in the cultural adaptation of PM+ for use with Syrian refugees.

