

Mental health and psychosocial support for (young) migrants and displaced persons: the (unintended) social consequences

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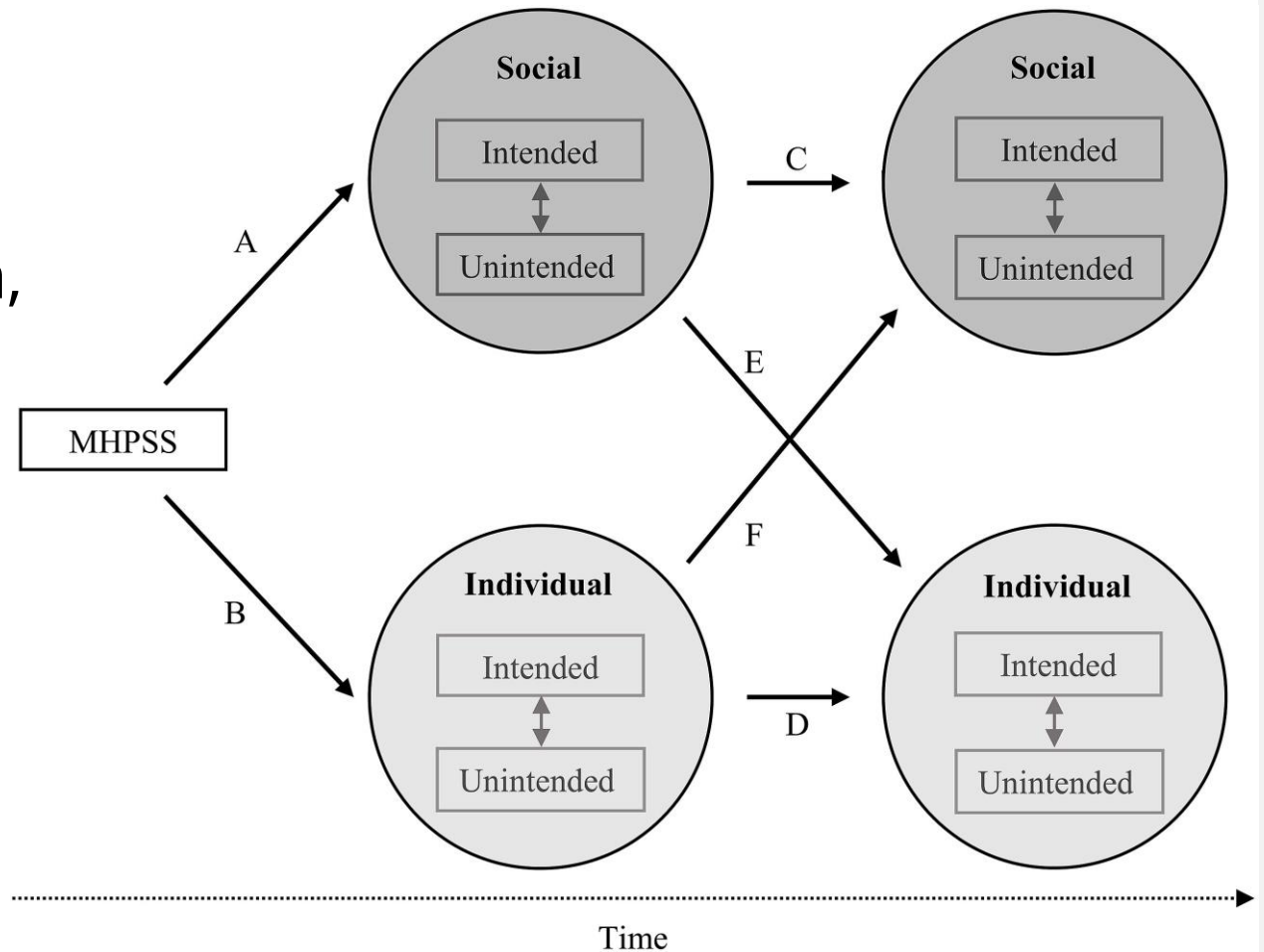
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Jan Koch

RESEARCH PROJECT

- Background: Historically, MHPSS research was mostly clinical. Policy makers and practitioners lead the way by also looking at social outcomes (e.g. peace and poverty reduction). Bridge the gap between research and practice.
- Research question: *What are the intended and unintended social effects of psychosocial support for migrants and displaced persons, why do they occur, and how can we mitigate negative effects and capitalise on positive ones?*

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Possible social outcomes relate to: cohesion, person-to-person relations, socio-economic, stigma reduction, family care, peace, communication, culture, gender.
- Social determinant versus MHPSS outcome.



RECOMMENDATIONS

What can we do?

1. Continue multi-sectoral collaboration between organisations offering MHPSS and other types of support.
2. Update *theory of change* in programme documents.
3. Improve measurements!
4. Organise a reference group of participants.

LATEST STUDY

- The **aim** of this study is to understand how individual and social post-migration factors interact, and in consequence, affect the well-being of undocumented migrants in the Netherlands.
- Included in the analysis: 'Life Skills' workshops, a psychosocial support intervention from the Netherlands Red Cross.

STUDY SAMPLE AND METHODS

- Retrospective interviews with participants from Life Skills workshops (2017, 2018, 2019).
- Closed-ended and open-ended questions: socio-demographics, health and well-being, safety, psychosocial support, social cohesion, trust, stigma, etc.
- Data was collected between December 2021 and February 2022.
- Total: 18 participants.

	Number (N = 18)	Percentage of total
Age		
20-29	3	16.7%
30-39	6	33.3%
40-49	4	22.2%
50-59	4	22.2%
60+	1	5.6%
Gender		
Male	13	72.2%
Female	4	22.2%
Other	1	5.6%
Partner		
Yes	6	33.3%
No	12	66.7%
At least one child		
Yes	6	33.3%
No	12	66.7%
Regions of birth		
Northern Africa	4	22.2%
Eastern Africa	7	38.9%
Western Africa	3	16.7%
South-Eastern Asia	1	5.6%
Western Asia	3	16.7%
South America	0	0%
Reasons for migrating (multiple)		
War, persecution or political reasons	10	55.6%
Work	2	11.1%
Study	1	5.6%
Poverty	1	5.6%
Marriage	1	5.6%
Other reasons	6	33.3%
Legal status		
Undocumented	8	44.4%
Asylum procedure	4	22.2%
Temporary or permanent residence	5	27.8%
Unknown	1	5.6%

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS AND WELL-BEING

- Overall score well-being: 3.1 *life satisfaction* and 3.0 *happiness* on a 5-point scale.
- Men scored higher than women.
- Participants without documents (undocumented or in asylum procedure) scored lower than those with documents.

YOUNGER MIGRANTS

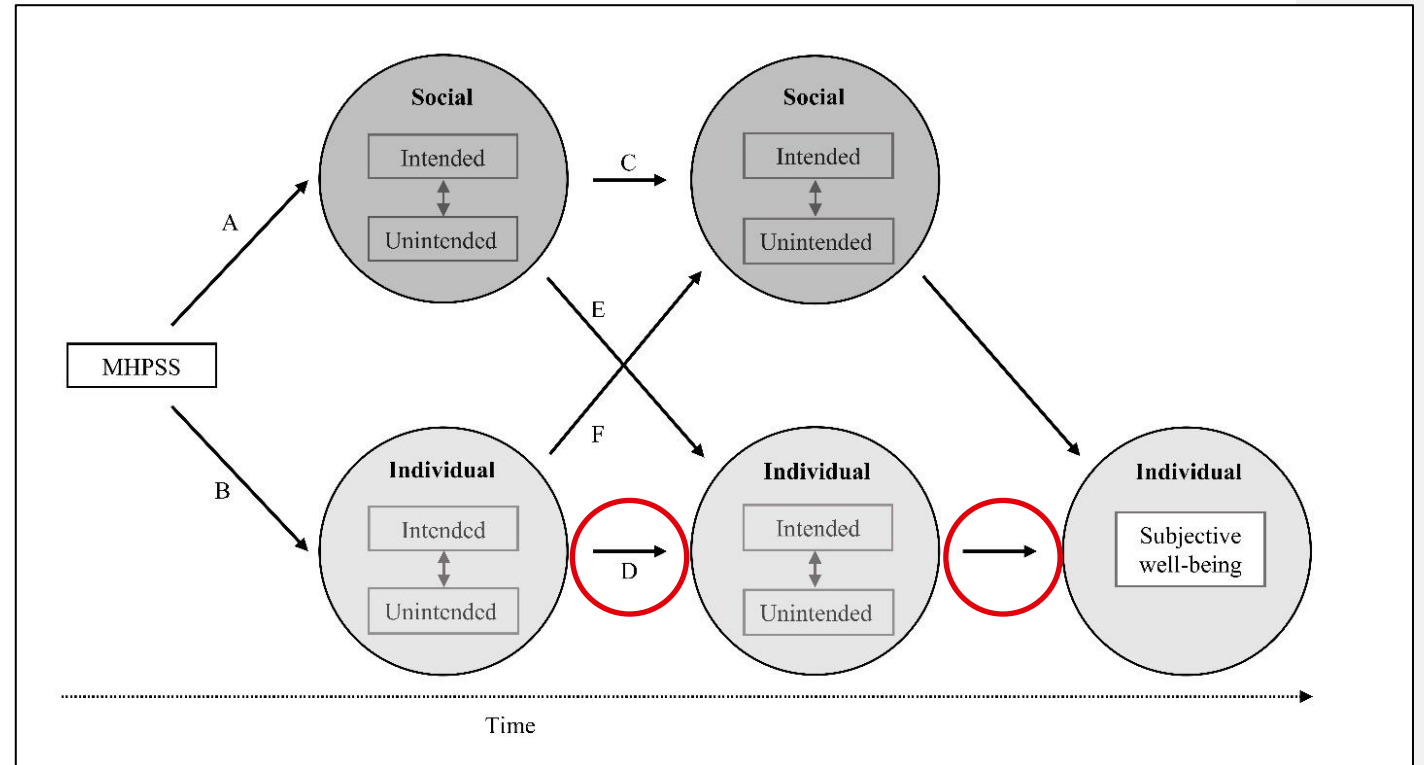
- Younger part of the sample scored higher (3.1 for life satisfaction and 3.6 for happiness) than older part of the sample (3.0 and 2.4).
- Possible explanations
 - More often have a legal status
 - More often have stable housing
 - Almost all (except one) have contact with family

POST-MIGRATION FACTORS

Conceptual model	Factors
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Healthb. Legal status and asylum systemc. Hope and future perspectivesd. Employment and lack of financial resourcese. Educationf. Housingg. Coping strategies
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Social contactsb. Sense of belongingc. Giving support to othersd. Truste. Discrimination and stigma
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Need for formal and informal supportb. Impact of psychosocial support

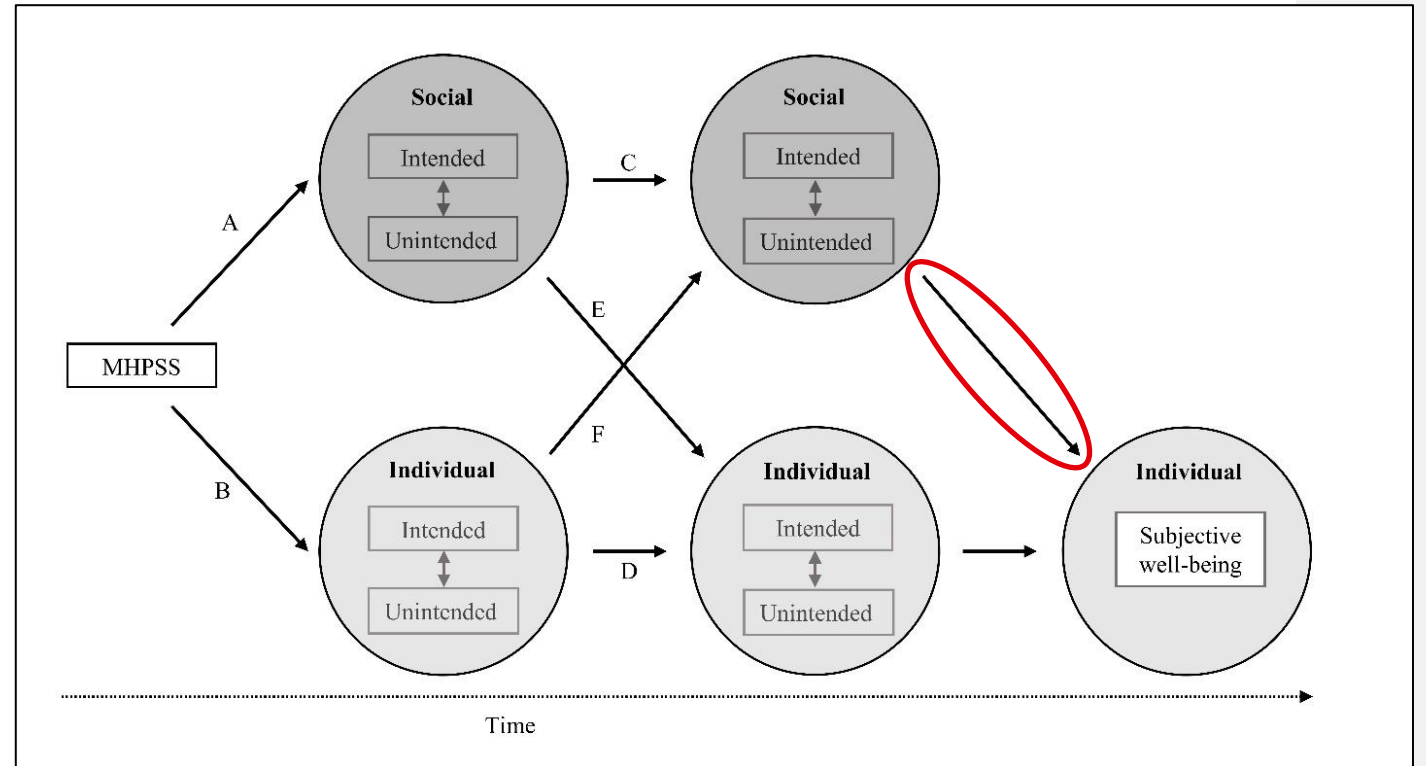
LEGAL STATUS

"So, without ID, I have nothing, I have stress and everything. No one can help me to go to school or anything. I came when I was 25, I started in [school], and then they give me a internship at the [supermarket]. I was working and everything, all that... even my stress was... [lower] because I was doing something."



GIVING SUPPORT

"I like to help, it makes me happy"



NEW SOCIAL CONTACTS

[T]

Did you also make contact with new people in the workshops?

[Participant]

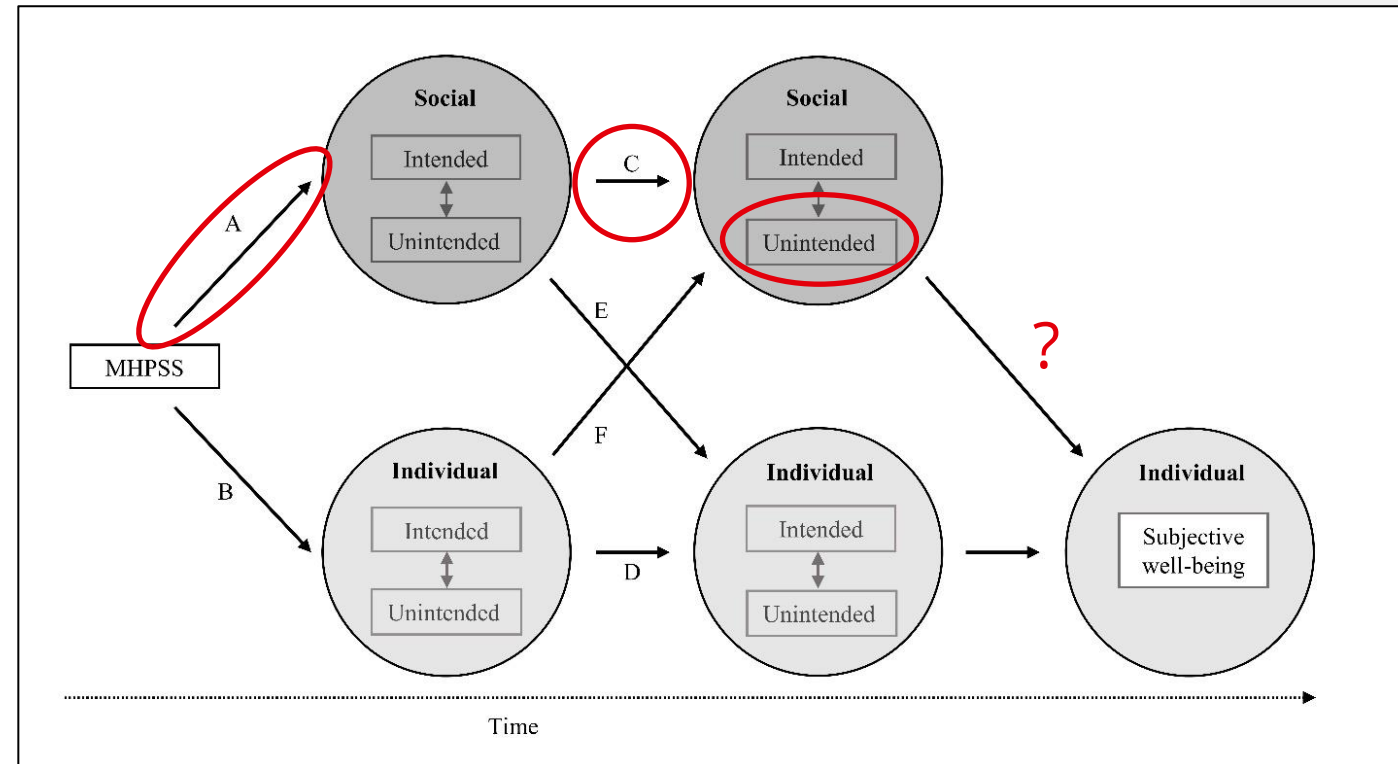
Yes I made some friends from different countries, we started making music also.

[T]

So you still have contact with people you met there, at the workshops?

[Participant]

Yes, some of them they are out of the Netherlands, some of them are back in their countries, some of them are still in different cities now."



TAKE-AWAYS

- Some post-migration factors greatly **determine well-being**.
- One factor can both form a **risk** as well as **protection**.
- Outcomes of MHPSS programmes can **reinforce** or **weaken** each other.
- “Well-being” is a **complex** concept: **define** the (expected) impact.
- **Conceptual model** can be used to better understand the outcomes of MHPSS.

NEXT STEPS IN RESEARCH PROJECT

- **Uganda:** soon-to-start data collection with TPO Uganda (in collaboration with IICBS and UNHCR) to study (unintended) social effects of community-based sociotherapy.
- **The Netherlands:** further data collection at the Netherlands Red Cross and Doctors of the World to study (unintended) social effects.

KEY QUESTIONS

Is the MHPSS intervention I am implementing the best intervention for the goal I wish to achieve?

KEY QUESTIONS

What outcomes should be reached to achieve the goal?

KEY QUESTIONS

How do I measure if the goal has been achieved?

KEY QUESTIONS

How do I involve the target group in the MHPSS intervention?

THANK YOU

Thank you for your attention.

Any ideas or questions? Please send me an email: tessa.ubels@ru.nl