Trauma Informed Practices

The Swedish Red Cross Treatment Centre for Persons Afflicted by War and Torture
• One out of six treatment centers in Sweden

• Refugees and their families, in need of interventions, rehabilitating them from war, torture and/or flight induced trauma

• Regardless of legal status

• Main criteria: PTSD
Our staff

- Administrators
- Interpreters
- Social workers
- Psychologists
- Physiotherapists
- M.D.
- Project managers – children and next of kin interventions

- The Red Cross – other branches
Treatments offered

• Psycho-social support

• CBT, EMDR, NET, ACT, IPT, PDT, CFT, DBT and PE

• TFF and other group interventions

• Medical assessment and rehabilitation

• Physiotherapy (relaxation, massage, exercise, TRE. acupuncture, (TS) yoga and mindfulness

• Family support
Considering gender

Sister of my heart
Considering age

Predicting PTSD in children

Research on trauma and proximity

Attachment
A pyramid of support – bottom up

- **Basic Psychosocial Support**: Promotion of positive mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.
- **Focused Psychosocial Support**: Level of formal training and supervision, skills and competencies.
- **Psychological Support**: Prevention of further psychological distress and mental health conditions.
- **Specialized Mental Health Care**: Treatment for mental health conditions.

% of people needing support

Protective environment

Swedish Red Cross
Strengthening resilience

the ability to respond to stressful or unexpected situations and crises
Resilience

- Prepared of what will happen, predictability
- Resistance in the situation – control of any free part of the body, praying reciting verses
- Being able to express aggression
- Finding some meaning, respect from others (political prisoners)
A definition of trauma

”An overwhelming event containing threat, violence, fear, that does not allow fight or flight and that can cause injury”

(van der Kolk)
Psychological Response

- Social context: Before, during, after the event
- Support system
- Conditions of incarceration
- Previous traumas
- Pre-existing psychological disorders
- Physical health
- Coping capabilities
- Age, developmental phase
- Additional losses
- Belief system: Preparedness
- Meaning of the event

Psychological Response

Swedish Red Cross
"Safety and trauma are incompatible. In order to heal, mind, body and brain have to be convinced it is safe to let go."

(van der Kolk, again)
Trauma informed care

trauma understanding

- safety
- connections
- coping  (managing emotions)
”There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”

Maya Angelou
Counteracting solitude

- The concept of trauma and being alone

- Talking about trauma, separation is a pervading theme – the violence itself, the silence and invalidation, and with our patients at the Red Cross Centre also the exile

- Much of rehabilitation is about reconnecting, through legal, social and psychological measures
THANK YOU!