



## LESSONS LEARNT: CULTURAL ADAPTION

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### 1. Introduction to the topic of the webinar

Culturally adapted interventions are associated with greater effectiveness than non-culturally adapted interventions, especially within humanitarian settings. Cultural adaptation of psychological interventions is reviewed as the modification of an intervention protocol to consider language, culture, and context in such a way that is compatible with the client's cultural patterns, meanings and values.

### 2. Challenges with cultural adaptation

- One needs to win the trust of the target population before starting to investigate the cultural nuances.
- There is not a set of adaptation guidelines on how to culturally adapt interventions and approaches
- Identify positive cultural practices that support mental health and psychosocial well-being and discourage potentially harmful cultural practices

### 3. Opportunities

- Needs analysis can help identify how to culturally adapt programming
- Identify cultural mediators who can help in the adaptation and learning of the cultural nuances and idioms of distress and well-being
- Identify research that has already been done identifying culturally relevant concepts
- Critically engage with the psychoeducation tools and the psychotherapy tools being used within the context to ensure these tools are adapted to the cultural nuances

### 4. Learnings from case studies

The Ecological Validity Model can be embraced within cultural adaptation studies. Language, persons, metaphors, content, concepts, goals, methods and context of the target population should be studied.

Due to the fact that association with positive imagery is one of the key techniques for bridging cultural barriers in psychotherapy with refugees, one of the guided imagery we benefited from is a peaceful garden or forest ('baghça and jangal') for Afghan refugees.

The explanation of the intervention rationale was adapted to make it plausible and meaningful for the beneficiaries. When conveying information about unknown terms and psychological processes like cognition, behavior, emotion etc. to the beneficiaries and adapted specific components were taken into account to provide the rationale in a culturally sensitive (e.g., values) and culturally understandable (e.g., easy language)



manner. Psychologists conduct interviews with Persian translators. The translators are also from Afghanistan.

## **5. Building blocks**

- Review the current literature of the region, context and/or the group of people
- Do a brief contextual analysis to better understand the different cultural groups and needs
- Engage with the key members of the community the intervention is working with to better understand how mental health and psychosocial wellbeing is perceived by all groups of the community
- Recruit cultural mediators to work with to adapt the interventions and approaches

## **6. Advocating**

- Emphasize the need for cultural adaptation to ensure no harm and to meet the needs of the target population
- Cultural adaptation contributes to the knowledge base of mental health and psychosocial wellbeing
- A person-centric approach includes understanding and integrating cultural nuances into project design and intervention

## **7. Helpful tools and resources**

Kim, Y. Y. (2017). Cross-cultural adaptation. Oxford research encyclopedia of communication.

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Heim, E., & Kohrt, B. A. (2019). Cultural adaptation of scalable psychological interventions. *Clinical Psychology in Europe*, 1(4), 1-22.

Dion, K. K., & Dion, K. L. (2001). Gender and cultural adaptation in immigrant families. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3), 511-521.

Bernal, G., & Domenech Rodríguez, M. M. (2012). Cultural adaptation in context: Psychotherapy as a historical account of adaptations.

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Bernal, G., Bonilla, J., & Bellido, C. (1995). Ecological validity and cultural sensitivity for outcome research: Issues for the cultural adaptation and development of psychosocial treatments with Hispanics. *Journal of abnormal child psychology*, 23, 67-82.