

# VIRGINIA INTERAGENCY REFUGEE MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

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## Objectives

- Identify the 3 agencies who are a part of the Interagency Refugee Mental Health Initiative.
- Explore the major activities associated with the Refugee Mental Health Initiative.
- Discuss the mental health screening process and use of the Refugee Health Screener 15 (RHS-15).



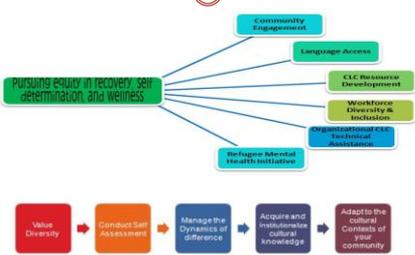
## Background

A collaborative effort of the Virginia Department of Social Services – Office of Newcomer Services, the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services – Office of Cultural and Linguistic Competence, and the Virginia Department of Health – Newcomer Health Program.

Established in 2011



## DBHDS Office of Cultural & Linguistic Competence




## DSS Office of Newcomer Services




## Newcomer Health Program




### Interagency Refugee Mental Health Initiative Key Activities

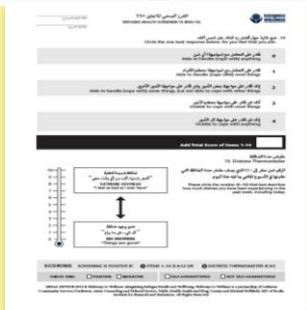
- RHS-15 Screening Implementation and Referral Process
- Regional Mental Health Councils
- Qualified Bilingual Staff Training
- Refugee Cultural Navigator Training Program
- Refugee Mental Health Virtual Toolkit
- QPR Suicide Prevention Trainings
- Mental Health First Aid Training and/or Train the Trainer training program for Refugee leaders and advocates.
- Mental Health ESL Module
- Trauma informed psycho educational curricula development/Peer Mentor Manual (TIPAG)
- Interpreter funding



### The Refugee Health Screener-15 (RHS-15)



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The RHS-15 (Refugee Health Screener-15) screens refugees for distressing symptoms of **anxiety and depression**, including PTSD. It is not **DIAGNOSTIC**, it is **PREDICTIVE**.

Available translations (bi-lingual/native language versions):

- Arabic, Nepali, Karen, Burmese, Russian, Somali, Tigrinya, Swahili, and Farsi and more.

Screening considered positive if score is >12 or if distress thermometer is >5



### RHS-15 Referral Process



### Local Refugee Mental Health Councils

A sustainable mechanism for community agencies and individuals to dialogue and support mental wellness among refugees in the area.

Intended to strengthen partnerships and referral processes for RHS-15, and access to public and private behavioral health services.

Currently facilitating strategic planning, mission, and visioning with each council.

- Roanoke, Greater Richmond, Harrisonburg, Fredericksburg

\*Charlottesville, Hampton Roads, Northern Virginia



## Local Refugee Mental Health Councils

- You may be asked to participate in your Local Refugee Mental Health Council
- You are an important player



## Qualified Bilingual Staff Training

As an organization, there are several resources that are available to facilitate communication with non- or limited-English proficient members. The following illustrates the various resources and their relative impact on members' quality of care if used as health care interpreters:



The National Qualified Bilingual Staff Model, effective communication is viewed as a non-linear process. Providers and staff can be effective in utilizing their linguistic skills if encounters are matched appropriately with the level of skills. For example, a Level 1 individual would be considered qualified if functioning within the defined scope of practice in a non-clinical setting.

\*National Diversity, National Linguistic & Cultural Programs 2005

## Refugee Mental Health Virtual Toolkit

- Toolkit to be housed on OCLC webpage
- Intended for BH providers
- Orientation to critical concepts in refugee mental health and wellness
- Easy to access ethnographic information on populations most commonly found in Virginia
- Specific interventions known to be useful in these populations
- Nationally recognized best practices



## QPR & MHFA Trainings

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The suicide rate for the general U.S. population is 12.4 per 100,000. The suicide rate of Bhutanese refugees resettled in the U.S. is 20.3 per 100,000.

Suicides have also been reported in other refugee populations, including immigrants from Burma, Somalia, and Burundi.

Refugees may be more likely to experience some of the risk factors that lead to suicide due to the loss experienced in leaving one's own country and the stress and isolation sometimes associated with resettlement.

By the end of the training, participants will be able to:

- Define suicide and describe how it is viewed within refugee communities
- Identify "risk factors" and clues of suicide
- Use the QPR Gatekeeper method to help stop someone from attempting suicide

**MHFA**

Mental Health First Aid is an international program proven to be effective. Peer-reviewed studies published in Australia, where the program originated, show that individuals trained in the program:

- Grow their knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illnesses and addictions.
- Can identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with a mental illness or addiction.
- Increase their confidence in and likelihood to help an individual in distress.
- Show increased mental wellness themselves.

**QPR**

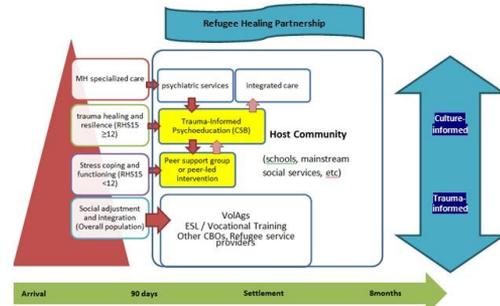
## Mental Health ESL Module

Old Dominion University (ODU) English Language Center

The course will focus primarily on the 10 mental health words and other health care vocabulary development with attention to how they apply this knowledge to listening and speaking.

- Training materials:**
- detailed 1-hour lesson plan, and instructor's copy of the student course pack with handouts;
  - explanatory instructors PowerPoint presentation
  - bound instructor's graphics package to be used when technology is not available
  - 20-minute video that will prepare instructors to teach the 1-hour lesson.

## Trauma Informed Psycho-educational Adjustment Group (TIPAG)



Dr. Hyojin Im Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work

## Interpreter Funding



Special funding pool that service providers can access when the costs for interpretation prevent immediate, needed case intervention.



## WANT MORE?



[//www.dbhds.virginia.gov/professionals-and-service-providers/oclc/oclc-focus-areas/refugee-mh](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/professionals-and-service-providers/oclc/oclc-focus-areas/refugee-mh)

