

SUPPORTING ADAPTATION AFTER TRAUMA WITHIN AN INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK

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Immigration & Settlement Learning Day:
Mobilizing Knowledge to Inspire Action

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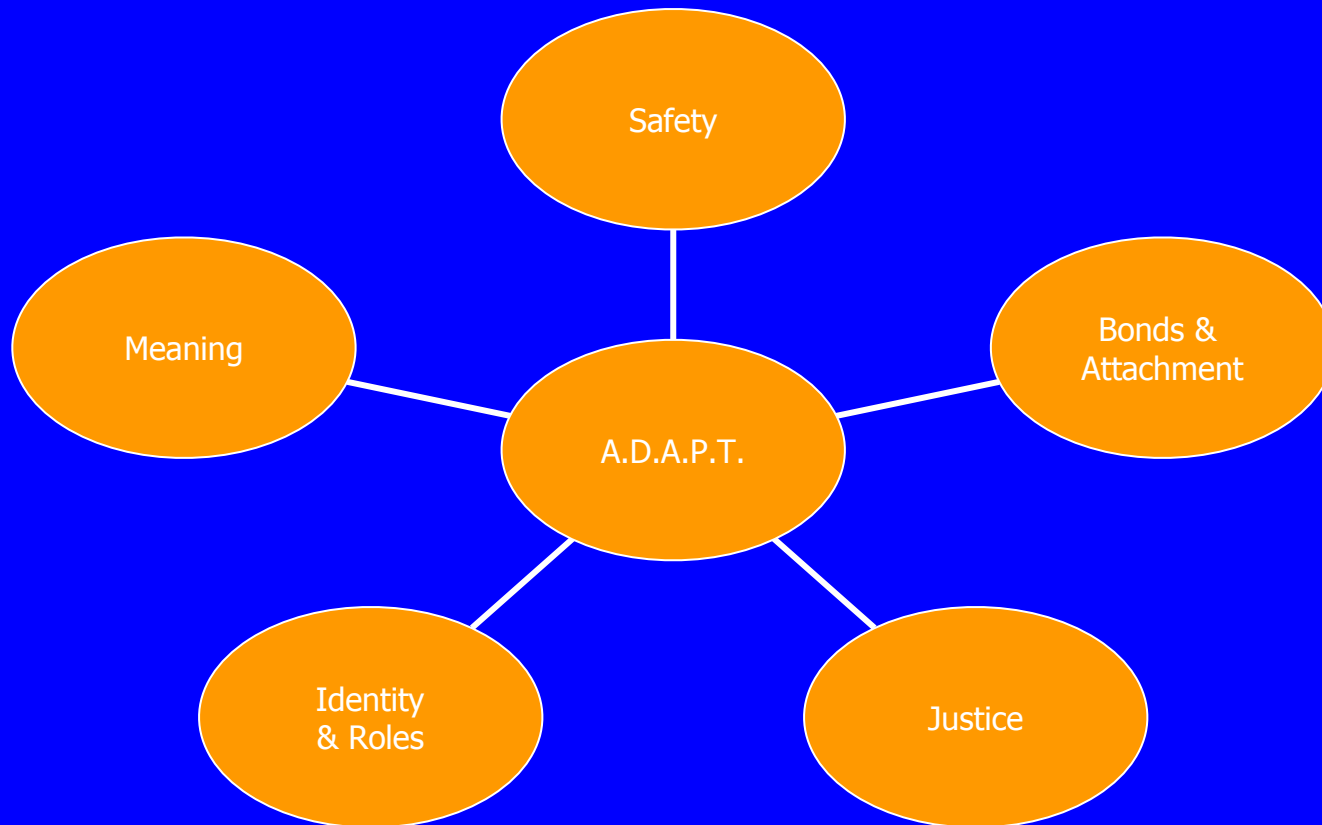
Silove's Adaptation and Development After Persecution & Trauma Model⁺

- An integrative psychosocial framework for connecting the multiple issues, stressors and resources facing war-affected individuals (Silove, 2005).
- The hypothesis underpinning the model is that extreme trauma fundamentally challenges one or more of 5 major adaptive systems which sustain “a state of psychosocial equilibrium in individuals and their communities” (Silove, 1999): **safety, bonds/attachment, identity/roles, justice and existential meaning.**
- Adaption refers to the ability of individuals and society to adjust to new information and experiences. Adaptation involves learning and adopting new behaviours to cope with change and constantly changing environments (Yohani, 2014).
- In the aftermath of war trauma, individuals and communities actively defend and maintain these five systems of psychosocial stability.
- Individual and collective mental health disorders can reflect a failure to adapt both individually and in the psychosocial environment in the aftermath following trauma.

⁺Silove, Derek. 1999. The psychosocial effects of torture, mass human rights violations, and refugee trauma: Toward an integrated conceptual framework. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases* 187:200-7.

⁺Silove, D. (2005.) From trauma to *persons*, ed. D. Ingleby, 29-51. New York, NY: Springer Science. survival and adaptation: Towards a framework for guiding mental health initiatives in post-conflict societies. In *Forced migration and mental health: Rethinking the care of refugees and displaced* (pp. 29-51). New York, NY: Springer Science.

Adaptation & Development After Persecution & Trauma



The hypothesis underpinning this model proposes that extreme trauma represents a fundamental challenge to one or more of these adaptive systems that bolster psychosocial equilibrium in individuals and their community – Silove, 2006,.

Example: Bonds and Attachment in War-Affected Youth (Yohani, 2015+)

“Children seek protection in networks of social support...conflict and violent social change have affected social welfare networks between families and communities” (Machel Report, 1996, p. 9)

A supportive post-trauma environment becomes important in mobilizing adaptive responses in youth and their families.

TYPES OF THREAT

- Witnessing violence against friends/family^{1,2,4,6,9,14,17,18}
- Separation from caregiver^{10,12,14,17}
- Traumatized caregivers^{2,7,13,16,18}
- Community connections & supports damaged⁴
- Caregivers unaware of child's mental health issues^{17,26}
- Caregivers fails to notice or discourages re-experiencing play²
- Difficult relationships with teachers in settlement countries¹⁵
- Disrupted family^{15,17}
- Lack of social support (eg. school, peers)^{3,16}

ADAPTIVE RESPONSE

- Social,^{3,8,11,12} family,^{7,8,13,21,26} & peer support^{1,4,8,11}
- Open-minded & flexible foster placements in settlement countries³
- Adoptions in child's community handled with discretion⁴
- Community/sociocultural reconstruction¹³
- Community involvement²¹
- Supportive environments in orphanages⁴ & schools^{8,10}

MALADAPTIVE RESPONSE

- PTSD symptoms: Re-experiencing, avoidance & hyper-arousal^{1,2,3,4,6,7,9,10,12,13,14,16,17,18,19,20,21,26,27,28}
- Impaired family functioning²
- Children unwilling/unable to play with others⁶
- Feeling guilty⁶
- Depression/sadness^{1,6,7,10,14,16,17,28}
- Anxiety^{1,4,6,7,8,16}

⁺ Yohani, S. C. (2015). Applying the ADAPT psychosocial model to war affected children and adolescents. SAGE Open July-September, 1–18, DOI: 10.1177/2158244015604189



Example: Supporting Bonds and Attachment

- Support parents to parent successfully
- Support communities to maintain cultural practices and stay connected to roots
- Support youth to keep home language alive
- Support community development initiatives that foster social interaction and supports – e.g. women’s groups
- Attachment-based therapeutic interventions
- Family-focused therapeutic interventions
- Other???



References

For More information about the ADAPT Model and applications to different populations see:

Silove, D. (1999). The psychosocial effects of torture, mass human rights violations, and refugee trauma: Toward an integrated conceptual framework. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases* 187:200-7.

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Silove, D. (2006). The impact of mass psychological trauma on psychosocial adaptation among refugees. In G. Reyes & G. A. Jacobs (Eds.), *Handbook of international disaster psychology: Refugee mental health* (pp. 1-17). Westport, CT: Praeger.

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Yohani, S. C. (2014). Considering gender relations and culture in the psychosocial adaptation of individuals and communities affected by sexualized violence in African conflicts. In D. Buss J. Lebert, & J. Rutherford (Eds.), *Sexual Violence in Conflict & Post-Conflict Societies: International Agendas & African Contexts*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis/Routledge.