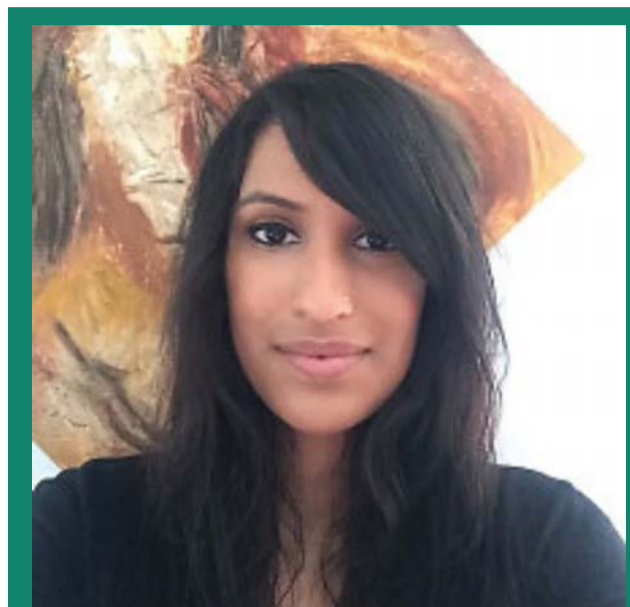


Resources and more information at: share.nned.net/2022/02/nnedvr-refugee-immigrant-and-asylee-communities

Hosted by the NNEED National Facilitation Center and SAMHSA's Office of Behavioral Health Equity, in partnership with SAMHSA's Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network Coordinating Office, this roundtable explored the unique experiences of refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers with a focus on the layers of trauma throughout and beyond the migration process, as well as strategies to address behavioral health needs upon resettlement. Panelists included the following (see full biographies at nned.net/10023/#panelists):



Dr. Nima Sheth



Cecily Peeples
Rodriguez



Dr. Hyojin Im



Kathi Anderson

Mental Health and Trauma of Migrant Populations

- Migrants may experience a range of trauma in their home countries — political conflict, violence, persecution, poverty — that result in pressure to leave or forced displacement
- About 44% of refugees (and a higher percentage of asylum seekers) have experienced physical and psychological torture
- Migrants may experience violence, familial separation, and fear along the way to the US — an average of passing through 10 countries
- Migration trauma impacts trust, self-esteem, safety, intimacy, feelings of hopelessness, and one's sense of control
- Most refugees and asylum seekers go through at least one [stress injury](#) and sit in the orange to red areas of the [Stress Continuum Model](#)
- Migrants' home countries rarely have the capacity for behavioral health supports, so they arrive with untreated mental health needs
- Migrants in the U.S. are experiencing heightened levels of stress and isolation due to COVID-19, as well as xenophobia and stigma

Barriers/Challenges to the Resettlement Process

- The U.S. registration and documentation system is currently only partially operable due to COVID-19
- There is a lack of information regarding seeking refugee/asylee status and available federal benefits; benefits are limited and insufficient
- Asylum seekers must establish credible fear in detention center interviews, relive their trauma, and often represent themselves in court due to a lack of legal support and low-cost/pro-bono attorneys
- Migrants struggle with housing, language access, and seeking health care with limited insurance
- Medical programs often lack culturally relevant care; resettlement agencies lack mental health supports

Strategies for Working With and Supporting Migrant Populations

- Familiarize yourself with your community's data and plan ahead using [data from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees](#)
- Invest in training (e.g., [QPR Suicide Prevention training](#), [Psychological First Aid training](#))
- Lobby state resources for grant dollars to fund non-traditional interventions
- Work with skilled interpreters with specialized behavioral health interpretation training
- Meet clients where they are and build trust slowly by offering what they need at the time; maintain confidentiality
- Focus on holistic health and meeting basic needs such as housing, food, and hygiene items
- Prioritize low-stakes social and psychosocial programs (e.g., peer support groups, wellness workshops); create integrated care clinics
- Offer medical affidavits and psychological evaluations to help asylum seekers establish credible fear and evidence in court hearings



...mental health is the backbone of what we provide because we understand, from research and anecdotally our own experiences, that the psychological scars take usually much longer to heal than physical scars.

- Kathi Anderson



Survey Results

Following the roundtable, participants were asked to fill out a survey on their experience. 124 attendees responded to the feedback survey (33%). Over 95% of respondents felt that the virtual roundtable was informative, effective in raising questions and conveying information, increased their knowledge, and will be useful in their work.

Participants

The roundtable was hosted on Zoom and streamed on Facebook Live.



380 participants
734 registrants
52% attendance rate



123 people reached
77 views
39 engagements