

## RECOMMENDATION

### for psychologists who help managing crisis situations with migrants

This recommendation from **Disaster Psychology Section of Hungarian Psychological Association** is intended to raise awareness on critical points of psychological support work during managing crisis situations with migrants.

#### 1. **Special position/role of psychologists during treatment of migration affairs.**

It's important to clarify the specific position/role of psychologists concerning the management of migration issues

- a. **If psychologist belongs to the government organization** responsible for migration affairs, his/her competencies and responsibilities are regulated within the organization, and he/she applies these rules.  
We recommend for these colleagues to map the opportunities for cooperation with civil psychologists helping in migration affairs, and initiate contact with these psychologists through competent leaders of their civil society- or charitable organization.
- b. **If psychologists** take part in the treatment of migration affairs as **a social volunteer** (not as professional helper), we recommend NOT to act psychologist's role.
- c. **If psychologists** take part in the treatment of migration affairs as **a professional (psychologist) volunteer/helper**, we recommend to join a civil society or charitable organization and prepare an official (documented) contract about his/her work (e.g. volunteer contract).

#### 2. **Network among psychologists who joined different civil society organizations**

- a. Psychologist who joined a civil organization should take up contact with psychologists of other organizations informing about this their organization's leaders. Communication between the various civil society organizations dealing with migration affairs should be encourage.
- b. Psychologists should try to connect with psychologists of state organizations, and with other helpers (e.g. emergency physicians, etc.) through their civil society organizations. Developing the cooperation is the competency of the leaders of the involved organizations.

#### 3. **The psychologist's relationship with the official bodies responsible for managing migration affairs**

Psychologists must be aware of the fact that responsibility for taking decision about measures lies with relevant state and local government organizations.

Therefore it is of particular importance to have a good relations with them. The psychologist's intervention allowed only with the approval of these bodies

#### **4. Psychologists' responsibilities during managing migration affairs**

- a. Crisis management expert psychologists should take part in training their non-expert colleagues in crisis management in their own and if needed in other organization
- b. Psychologists should maintain close working relation with the social helpers and health professionals. Crisis psychologist experts may also carry out their preparation, and support them.
- c. Beyond the necessary emergency psychological care, psychologist may provide more personal care for a migrant only in some special case: if a migrant asks for it, or a social worker proposes it. The psychologist shouldn't actively initiate psychological treatment going beyond the emergency psychological care for a migrant.
- d. Psychological care should happen if only possible in separated space – both in the case of supporting helpers and migrants. It should appear in the language of migrants that this venue is place of „Emergency psychological care”
- e. Foreign languages can cause difficulties in psychological treatment. Please consult at homepage of HPA, where psychological work criteria, if client and psychologist communicate on a third common language, or by translation of an interpreter, are given.
- f. Psychologist working within the framework of civil society organization are not competent to care for law enforcement staff (e.g. police). However, they may indicate the problem noticed to psychologist working at government organization.

#### **5. The psychologists' responsibilities and possible role in the support of social helpers**

- a. Psychologists' survey the psychological status of people at the venue, and care for those who are in crisis, as soon as possible
- b. Psychologists can help with professional suggestions to build/create quarters for migrants (e.g. priority for families, children, etc.), to structure migrants' free time, especially children's time, etc.
- c. Psychologists can train civil society organization's helper to recognize traumatic reactions, and to understand the social-psychological mechanisms of critical mass-reactions
- d. Psychologists can provide individual or group debriefing or discussion of cases for civil society organizations' helpers, if needed.

## **6. Communication**

- a.** In the present migration situation it is particularly important to promote optimal communication (both content and form wise). This also requires that the psychologist helpers possess accurate and authoritative information
- b.** Psychologist experts can help create effective forms of communication if it is needed (e.g. conflict management training for helpers)

## **7. Protection of the psychologist**

- a.** Psychologists need to assess the eventual need for protecting of their own lives and physical integrity before the commencement of work. They must continuously monitor their working conditions according with these points and ensure the necessary cooperation with other helpers.
- b.** As psychologists get their own personality and emotions involved in work, it is particularly important to ensure enough relaxation time in order to preserve their ability to work. This should be discussed with the head of their local organization
- c.** Supervision or case discussion must be available several times a week or daily, according to psychologists' need during their work with migration affairs. To achieve this, you need to organize and ensure the psychologists' emotional and psychical relief.

## **8. Data protection and privacy policy**

- a.** Data protection and privacy issues should be treated with caution. The principles of Ethical Codes for Psychologists serves as guidelines for these issues. Psychologists must strictly abide by the instructions of the Ethical Codes
- b.** If circumstances of the case warrant the disclosure of the identity of the client, psychologist can disclosure only the actually relevant information and only with the client's written consent

Budapest, 22. September, 2015.