

Syrian Settlement Responsibilities

Refugee Sponsorship Training Program



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AGENDA

- What is Settlement
- Objectives
- One year and beyond Issues
- Post arrival Orientation
- Cultural Awareness / Syrian Urban,Rural
- Cultural Adjustment
- Risk Factors
- Overview of settlement responsibilities
- Cost Table
- Employment, Health, Housing support-other
- Syrian Taboos

AGENDA

- Trauma Experience, Triggers, & support
- Support for Parents
- Parenting and Children
- QUESTIONS

What is settlement?

Brainstorm



Objectives

- ❖ Identify some of the issues that arise during the first year after arrival
- ❖ Share some suggestions on how to handle these issues
- ❖ Explore the outcomes or expectations related to the (re)settlement/sponsorship of refugees

Issues In The First Year And Beyond

- ✓ Family Reunification
- ✓ Cultural adjustment / shock
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Health



Family Reunification

- Family members left behind
- One Year Window (OYW) Opportunity
- “Echo effect” - requests to sponsor relatives or friends who were left behind

OYW Application must be submitted to CPO-W within one year of the Principal Applicant's arrival

Sponsoring group responsible for family members coming through One Year Window, if PA not self-reliant

Post-Arrival Orientation Session

- Provide more details about their sponsorship: could be informal and flexible
- May need to arrange with translator to be present
- Transportation system or arrangements
- 911, internet/cell phone plan, activities in the coming week (school visit, clinic, etc.)
- Assess religious needs and arrange as needed
- Share about your family, friends, community groups – you already know some of their details!

CULTURAL Awareness

- Culture can be seen as a collection of customs, beliefs, values and institutions that create a general identity and ways of behaving for a given people. Culture provides a history that describes who we are and, for each person, it reflects his or her own unique form of identity. Our behaviors and interactions with others are generally seen as forms of expressing culture. Cultural generalizations can be helpful in that they enable us to make predictions about people and situations and cope with every day decision making in our lives. However, they should not tempt us to have a stereotype and inhibit our ability of gazing at objects individually.

Syria – Urban vs Rural

- Syrians take great pride in their cities
- Damascus, the capital, has been called the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world
- Rural areas contrast with wealth of its cities
- Rural people and immigrants have lower level of education but have more experience in community organizing (because they have to rely on themselves)



Urban



Rural

Food and Drink

- Eating is an important activity
- Value eating meals with family and friends
- Inviting others to share one's food is an essential courtesy
- Person invited is expected to decline the invitation the first time out of politeness
- Breakfast: tea/coffee with pita bread and either cheese, eggs, hummus, or yogurt, jam, olives
- Lunch: main meal around 2 to 3 pm is often a cooked stew, with meat or chicken and vegetables, served with rice and salads.
- Dinner: late and similar to breakfast
- **Muslims do not eat pork and devout Muslims do not drink wine**

Food Suggestions from a Syrian

- Burghul (cracked wheat): medium and fine
- Mediterranean diet generally: Vegetable oil, short-grain rice, Potatoes, Garlic, Pickles, pasta, pita/naan bread, tahini
- Lentils, chick peas or fava beans, tomato paste/crushed tomatoes
- Butter, Yogurt, Milk, Flour, Sugar, Yeast, All spice, Cumin
- La Vache Qui Rit cheese (popular amongs Syrian kids)



Bonus Foods

- Za'atar (mix of dried thyme with cumin and sesame seeds – Middle Eastern Store or could make it!)

+ large coking pot

Halal Meats available at:

Please research your local grocery stores and find out where Halal foods are sold



Cultural Adjustment

Remember...

- No one is a refugee by choice – forced to flee out of fear for their lives and liberty
- Major coping supports missing/new pressures
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Culture shock

distress

**2. CONFRONTATION,
CRISIS & CHALLENGE**

**3. STAGE OF
RECONSTRUCTION
(RECOVERY)**

4. ADJUSTMENT

1. HONEYMOON



Four Stages of Cultural Adjustment

STAGE	CHARACTERIZED BY:	SUPPORT TO PROVIDE DURING THIS STAGE
Honeymoon Stage	An initial reaction of enthusiasm, fascination, admiration, and cordial, friendly, superficial relationships with hosts. (Note: Refugees have not come to Canada by choice, and may be less enthusiastic.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide orientation and information • Focus on the practical aspects of becoming competent in the new situation (i.e. getting around, looking for a job, language training).
Challenge and Crisis	<p>Differences in language, concepts, values, and symbols lead to feelings of inadequacy, frustration, anxiety, and anger. During this time, studies show that most people find the most difficult situations to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making friends your own age • Dealing with someone who is cross • Approaching others • Appearing in front of an audience • Getting to know people in-depth, intimately • Understanding jokes, humour, sarcasm • Dealing with people staring at you • Being with people that you don't know very well • Complaining in public/dealing with unsatisfactory service 	<p>Give empathy, friendship and support; accept that anger and frustration are normal and legitimate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information about culture shock. • Help newcomers to see their competencies. • Provide opportunities for the newcomers to talk about their culture. • Provide opportunities to learn together about cross-cultural communications. • Talk about the most difficult situations. Share how these things are dealt with in both your cultures. • Share jokes from your different cultures; talk about why they translate (or not). • Set up a fun time for role plays or role reversals (see Appendix). • If the newcomers are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or other psychological problems, help them to find appropriate help.

Four Stages of Cultural Adjustment

STAGE	CHARACTERIZED BY:	SUPPORT TO PROVIDE DURING THIS STAGE
Recovery	<p>The crisis is resolved as the person learns the language and culture of the host country. Life factors known to reduce stress and aid recovery include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Having a sense of purpose • Being socially or politically involved • Having opportunities (esp. re: career) • Maturity • Having strong social support • Having structure in one's life • Equal or greater status than before 	<p>You will notice that in a number of these areas, neither you nor the newcomer has any control. In fact, in some areas such as <i>status</i>, newcomers are very likely to be worse off than before. However, there are things you can do to enhance a sense of purpose, belonging, and structure. During this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the newcomers to find employment and to map out an employment strategy that will lead to a fulfilling job. • Help the newcomers to see the positive contribution they are making to your community. • As the newcomers' English abilities increase, set aside more times for storytelling—this is both an opportunity for the newcomers to teach you about their situation, and a way for them to structure/make sense of events.
Adjustment	<p>Newcomers begin to work in and enjoy the new culture, though there may be some instances of anxiety and strain.</p>	<p>Continue to provide friendship and support; and continue to expect to learn as you walk alongside the newcomer.¹</p>

RISK FACTORS

Post-migration challenges that can jeopardize mental

well-being:

- **Acculturation** (the process of adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group.)
- **Unemployment (and underemployment)**
- **Discrimination**
- **Structural factors**

The period of high risk for the development of depressive symptoms is between 10 – 24 months post-arrival

What are the settlement responsibilities?

Assisting refugees with everything they need when they come to Canada, such as:

- Welcoming refugees at the airport
- Orientation to life in Canada
- Arranging temporary accommodation
- Helping to find permanent accommodation
- Applying for IFH and Ontario Health Card
- Find health services: doctor, dentist, etc.
- Enroll in English classes
- Apply for a Social Insurance Number
- Find a job
- Open a bank account
- Enroll children in school
- Apply for child tax benefit
- Provide emotional and moral support

**Connect
with a
settlement
agency!**



Sponsoring Group's Responsibilities

To provide the refugee during the sponsorship period with:

- Reception
- Care
- Lodging and
- Settlement assistance for the sponsored refugees in the expected community of settlement

Length of Sponsorship

Sponsorship period:

- 12 months from date of arrival of refugee

or

- until the refugee becomes self-supporting and no longer requires settlement assistance

In exceptional circumstances, visa officers can ask for a longer sponsorship period (up to 36 months)

Settlement Planning

Required settlement assistance:

- Housing
- Clothing
- Food
- Transportation
- Schooling
- Childcare
- Any other additional living expenses
- Emotional, moral and other logistical help



The Settlement Plan

Sponsorship Cost Table

Family Size	12 Months of Income Support	Start-up Costs	Estimated Total Annual Settlement Cost (\$)
1	9,800	2,800	12,600
2	16,800	4,400	21,200
3	17,700	5,300	23,000
4	20,000	7,000	27,000
5	22,500	7,200	29,700
6	24,500	8,000	32,500
Additional member	1,550	1,000	2,500

Financial Support

Provide financial and settlement support for the duration of the sponsorship period

Welcoming them at the airport

Orienting them to life in Canada

Arranging temporary accommodation

Helping them to find permanent accommodation

Apply for health card

Find doctor, dentist, other health services

Enroll children in school

Apply for Child Tax Benefit

Enroll in English classes

Apply for a Social Insurance Number

Find a job

Connect with a settlement agency

Provide emotional and moral support

Open a bank account

Employment

- Connect them with employment resource centers
- Register them in job search training workshop
- Help them find a job
- Encourage them to enroll in professional training or vocational schools
- Assist them in finding volunteering position to gain Canadian work experience

Health

- Assist Refugees with applying for OHIP and social insurance number
- Assist with finding a family doctor and/or dentists
- Assist in immunization of children for schools
- Explain health benefits covered by the IFH (Interim Federal Health) and OHIP

Housing

- Assist Refugees in finding and securing affordable housing
- Offer housing Application Assistance
- Assist with contacting landlord
- Provide rent, furniture and household items
- Advise Refugees on the rights and responsibilities of the Landlord and Tenant

Education

- Support newcomers to improve their language skills and knowledge by enrolling them in ESL Classes
- Assist in evaluating their foreign credential
- Help enrol their children in schools

Transportation

- Provide orientation with regard to travelling within the city using public transportation
 - A. Where to buy tokens/metro pass
 - B. How to use Transfer
 - C. Directions (eg. East, West, North or South Bound) or (one or two blocks east or west ect)

Other

- Banking
- Grocery
- Recreation
- Tax Receipt

Some Syrian Taboos

- Taboos
 - **Alcohol consumption**
- Socializing
 - **No premarital sex**
 - **Dating**
- Education
 - **home work done at home**
 - **Not split classes**

GREETINGS

- **Men greeting Men** – Men shake hands when greeting one another in formal settings. Good friends and family usually kiss once on each cheek in more informal settings.
- **Women greeting Women** – Same as men, but the kiss on the cheek is much more prevalent.
- **Greetings between Men & Women** – Physical contact between unrelated men and women is very uncommon and might be offensive to religious people. A handshake is the norm in more secular circles, cheek kissing is usually unacceptable. It is best to allow the woman to extend her hand first. If the hand is not extended, than a slight nod while placing your hand on your chest is the polite thing for men to do.
- **Note:** It is taboo for religiously observant men to touch women and vice-versa

Socializing

- Conservative Muslim women do not socialize with men outside their families
- Greeting: members of the opposite sex shake hands, Muslim women may instead, nod and put their hands on their hearts
- Syrian men and women are affectionate with members of the same gender.
- It is normal for two men or women to hold hands, lean on and touch each other, and greet each other with kisses on the cheeks.
- Stigma against gays and openly gay behavior. LGBTI individuals are likely to keep their sexuality very private.
- Intense, stand close to you, loud voices, more gestures for normal conversation.

COMMUNICATION

- The communication style is usually indirect, especially when not conversing with close friends and family.
- It is common to hear people speaking in loud voices and becoming animated during conversations. This usually does not signify anger; people just tend to be expressive.
- PERSONAL SPACE AND TOUCHING
- An arm's length of personal *space is* common in most situations. It's usually a bit more in business situations and when interacting with the opposite sex.
- Touching the arms and/or shoulders during conversations is acceptable and common between members of the same sex. Touching of the leg is not usually acceptable. Touching between members of opposite sex in public is generally unacceptable.
- Close friends of the same gender often will walk hand in hand or arm and arm. This is the case for men and for women and is purely a sign of friendship.

GESTURES

- Flicking the wrist with an outstretched hand usually means "*What Do You Want?*"
- Raised eyebrows combined with a slight back flick of the head usually means "NO."
- EYE CONTACT
- Direct eye contact is the norm.
- Indirect eye contact can be seen as rude or condescending except when talking with an elder; in that case it is usually seen as being humble/polite.

Trauma Experienced by Syrian Children

- In one study, it was found that 60% of the children surveyed had seen someone shot at, kicked or physically harmed.
- 30% of the children had themselves been shot at, kicked or physically harmed.
- So far, 11,000 unaccompanied children have crossed the Syrian border
- Witnessing and being a victim of violence can cause a person's mental health, and high level of stress

Traumatic Triggers to be Mindful of

- Sound of a Loud bang
- Fire works
- Popping of a balloon
- Sound of jets (Air Show)
- The presence of an armed officer

Trauma Support for Syrian Refugees

- Dealing with mental health issues among refugees is daunting,
- Good mental health promotes effective integration. (Dr. Morton Beiser)
- provide children with healing and learning spaces that offer a safe and stable environment to learn and play
- Provide/refer support programs aimed at equipping mothers, fathers, and caretakers with the knowledge and skills to cope with psychosocial stress and to provide appropriate protective care for their children

Supporting Parents

- Refugee parents may feel overwhelmed, uncertain about their parenting skills in their new country
- Giving genuine, appropriate praise at key moments helps; parents feel more confident in working with caregivers
- Encourage families to trust their own parenting practices and not to make any major changes to routines done at home while the child is settling into the program

Supporting Parents

- A parent's authority over the child should always be supported
- However , if there is any suspicion of child abuse it must be reported to the proper authorities
- Try to give parents guidance on parenting expectations in Canada early in their settlement support to help them understand this important part of Canadian life.

Supporting Parents

- Assist the parents Access day care subsidies where possible

Parenting and Children

- Help children with schoolwork and monitor activities as best they can
- Boys often monitor the behavior of their sisters
- Syrians are affectionate with children –even the children of strangers – and will hold them on their laps, tousele their heads, and kiss the cheeks of babies and children.
- Children are expected to shake hands when they meet new people and show respect for elders
- Corporal punishment is common and accepted

QUESTIONS

- Thank you for listening and I will now take your questions.

For more information...



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