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Running women's problem solving groups among Syrian refugees in Lebanon: A positive experience

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Lebanon is facing a major challenge with the influx of Syrian refugees into its territories since April 2011. The number of registered refugees in the UNHCR office has reached 1,200,000 in October 2016, with 75% of them being women and children. Refugees are in a great need for mental health support, especially that they have experienced various traumas and significant threats to their safety. Thus, given the current situation and the high need for sustainable interventions, the aim of the current project was to improve the readiness of health workers to respond to the psychological needs have displaced women Syrian Refugees affected by the civil war in Syria. Hence, they were trained in the delivery of a group psychological intervention aimed at enhancing problem solving skills among female Syrian refugees. These groups were also offered to Lebanese women from the host community, hence mixing the women, with the aim of bringing them closer to each other and bring the two communities closer together. The training in problem solving consists of 12 sessions which are semi structured in content. During each meeting the women in the group shared their experiences, problems and issues they needed help with. They ranged from personal, familial, social etc... The number of beneficiaries from this training has ranged between 160-200 Syrian and Lebanese women who would be affected directly every 3 months, hence between 640-800 women in one year. The evaluation of the women of these groups were very positive, they reported less depression and anxiety symptoms, less stress and better communication between them and other family members. They emphasized the importance of having similar groups for men.

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