DPAER/CBM/Doc(2023)4

**Psychological Support to Refugees:**

**Strengthening Professional Capacities**

**Preliminary Concept for Follow-up event in Poland**

***Introduction***

The Council of Europe – with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland - organised in Warsaw aPilot Training on***Psychological Support to Refugees: Strengthening Professional Capacities*** on 19-20 December 2022. Following the feedback from the participants, it had been agreed that it could be useful to organise a follow-up in 2023 with an aim to address in detail a range of aspects of psycho-social support. Bearing this in mind, the Council of Europe would like to propose a follow-up focused on psychosocial support to children and adolescents.

Children who experience war or conflict encounter multiple traumatic events and losses which impact a child’s entire spectrum of contextual, interpersonal and intrapersonal realms, such as living in constant fear for their personal and family’s safety, being exposed to violence, suffering distress at being separated from family members and even the death of a loved one. They may have to flee war at short notice leaving behind their home, school, friends and relatives. These experiences expose them simultaneously to many adversities during childhood. Providing children with systematic psychosocial support early on, may not eradicate the distress and psychological pain, but it can improve children’s resilience and the overall healing and wellbeing of children.

The Council of Europe would like to propose a follow-up practical training based on the Organisation’s standards, in particular the specialised Manual “***Psychological Support and Assistance to Children who have Experienced Traumatic Events – Educational and Methodical Manual***”, which was developed in 2022 by international and Ukrainian experts. This manual focuses on providing information and practical tools on resilience-oriented psychosocial support for children during both acute and quieter periods of war. It also briefly introduces more severe mental health disorders caused by traumatic events and their evidence-based clinical treatments for children and adolescents.

The proposed training is intended for professionals working with children and adolescents and presents

* practical tools for psychosocial support of children and adolescents;
* exercises to build resilience and strengthening professionals’ self-care skills to prevent professional “burn out”;
* good practices for accompanying youngsters’ transition into adulthood: examples of Ukrainian youth/host country projects for integration and empowerment of young people to discuss, share and build common initiatives.

The Council of Europe training aims to enhance the capacities of relevant professionals working on the ground with children and adolescents, *inter alia*,

* psychologists, in particular school psychologists, psychologists in refugees centres/frontier centres and psychologists involved with NGOs assisting children, refugees from Ukraine.
* professionals working in everyday settings with children, such as child protection officials, school educators and representatives of NGO volunteers hosting Ukrainian children.

An exchange of views with Ukrainian counterparts could be envisaged for participants of the training.

**DRAFT AGENDA**

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| DAY 1 | |
| 09:00 – 09:20 | Opening Remarks |
| Morning | Topics to be covered during the morning session:   * Traumatic events in childhood and their impact * Psychological support for war-affected children to minimize the impact of traumatic events * Possible exchange of views with Ukrainian counterparts |
|  | Practical session on building resilience and strengthening self-care skills of professionals working with children and adolescents traumatized by war (in two groups) |
| 13:00 – 14:30 | Lunch *(provided by organisers)* |
| Afternoon | Psychosocial skills and trauma treatment techniques: Working Groups   1. Professionals working with children (pre-school, primary school) 2. Professionals working with adolescents |
| 18:00 | Wrap-up of Day 1 |
| 19:00 | Buffet-dinner for participants of the training *(provided by organisers)* |
| DAY 2 | |
| Morning | Psychosocial skills and trauma treatment techniques: 2 Working Groups *(continuity)* |
| Late morning | Transition into adulthood of the youngsters - practices for integration and empowerment of young people to discuss, share and build common initiatives : Romanian experience. |
| 13:00 – 14:30 | End of the training and lunch *(provided by organisers)* |