

Introduction

This information package provides a list of useful resources for Addiction and Mental Health professionals working with the Syrian refugee population. Additional resources are also available at www.albertahealthservices.ca/refugees/.

Population Profile: Syrian Refugees

The conflict in Syria, which began in 2011, has caused widespread displacement with more than 4 million Syrian refugees fleeing the country, mainly to neighboring countries such as Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq.

Conditions in asylum countries vary but overall are quite poor. Iraq, Jordan and Turkey are the only three countries that have formal refugee camps; however, the majority of Syrian refugees (85 percent) live in non-camp environments such as urban centers or makeshift dwellings. Syrian refugees resettled to Canada will come primarily from asylum countries such as Jordan and Lebanon, where local integration is not possible due to the overwhelming number of refugees residing in those countries.

In order to prepare for the arrival of refugees, Citizen and Immigration Canada (CIC) compiled available information on demographics and health characteristics of Syrian refugees. Some of the most common medical conditions found include: hypertension, diabetes and visual or hearing impairment.

In addition, mental illness and trauma are common given the experiences in Syria, in transit and in asylum countries. Symptoms may not appear right away and therefore, follow-up is crucial.

In terms of languages, of the Syrian refugees resettled to Canada in 2014, 46 percent reported knowing at least one of Canada's official languages, making language skills training an important factor in integration.

It is essential that cultural considerations are given to Syrian refugees when providing services as there are a number of important aspects to consider such as providing culturally appropriate health care, understanding family dynamics, religious beliefs and food and dietary restrictions. For more information, see: [Population Profile: Syrian Refugees \(Citizen and Immigration Canada\)](#)

Current information on how Canada is helping Syrian refugees is available on the CIC website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/crisis/canada-response.asp>.

Immigrant & Refugee Women's Cultural Health Practices – A Guide for Health Care Professionals

This purpose of this manual is to provide health care professionals with information that will support them in their knowledge, and skill building in providing culturally competent services to first generation immigrant and refugee women:

[Immigrant & Refugee Women's Cultural Health Practices: A guide for health care professionals.](#)

Multicultural Mental Health Resource Centre

The [Multicultural Mental Health Resource Centre](http://www.multiculturalmentalhealth.ca/clinical-tools/mental-health-information/by-language/arabic/) is a good on-line repository for translated resources. A list of patient information resources translated into Arabic is provided here: <http://www.multiculturalmentalhealth.ca/clinical-tools/mental-health-information/by-language/arabic/>
Caring for Kids New to Canada

Caring for Kids New to Canada www.kidsnewtocanada.ca is an essential resource for the many health and social service professionals who will be helping to resettle Syrian families.

Developed by the Canadian Paediatric Society and a network of experts and organizations, this site has evidence-based information on assessment and screening, medical conditions, mental health, child development, and much more. It also has tools, checklists, links to local resources, and information about the Canadian health care system.

On-Line Learning Module on Trauma Informed Care

The content is intended for all service providers, regardless of their role. In this module, learners will be introduced to key concepts and practices of Trauma Informed Care. The purpose of this learning opportunity is to increase knowledge about psychological trauma and improve practice to be more trauma informed and patient/client centered.

The module can be accessed externally here: [What is Trauma Informed Care?](#)

Individuals may also [subscribe](#) to the Trauma Informed Care (TIC) newsletter. Each edition identifies a “practice tips” section that is likely relevant to the workforce working with refugees across the province.

Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR)

As many of you are already aware there has already been an investment within AHS in Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) which is evidence-based approaches to responding to disaster and emergency situations. Diane McNeil and Deb Gray can assist with specific questions regarding training and resources:

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Culture, Context and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing of Syrians

This report aims to provide information on the sociocultural background of the Syrian population as well as cultural aspects of mental health and psychosocial wellbeing relevant to care and support. It is based on an extensive review of the available literature on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), within the context of the current armed conflict in Syria.

[Culture, Context and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing of Syrians \(UNHCR\)](#)

Translation/Interpretation Services

Managers of internal AHS sites/units/departments wishing to have access to telephone interpretation can access the request form (Telephone Interpretation Request form) through the Provincial Forms Library which is part of employee tools on Insite. If your department needs instructions on the use of this service, please contact Louise Behiel at louise.behiel@ahs.ca or 403-616-0278 for more information.

Non-AHS agencies may access telephone interpretation services using the information and form below:

[Request for Telephone Interpretation \(Non-AHS Agencies\)](#)
[Info on Access to Telephone Interpretation \(Non-AHS Agencies\)](#)