Suggested time - 120 minutes

Session content

Nurturing resilience
Why refugees flee
Flight and camps
Some impacts of conflict on refugee children and young people.

Session outcomes

At the end of this session participants will have an understanding of:

- The type of social and political situations which cause refugees to flee their home countries
- The persecution that refugee children and young people experience in their home countries
- The horror of flight from one's home and life in refugee camps
- The importance of acknowledging and nurturing resilience in refugee students.

Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya
Participant handouts
- Copies of PowerPoint slides for Session 1, printed as handouts
- Copies of background readings for Session 1

Materials needed
- DVD *Surviving War, Surviving Peace*
- PowerPoint presentation for Session 1
- Data projector and laptop with external speakers or DVD player, TV monitor and OHP
- Plain flipchart and marker pens

Session Structure

*Display title slide*

- Ensure that participants know each other
- Present an outline of the complete course, explaining that the training program will:
  - increase participants’ understanding of the refugee experience, and
  - explore ways in which schools can support refugee children and young people through the education system.
- Explain that the teaching and learning needs of students are not the prime focus of this course. However, the material presented will assist teachers and school counsellors to better understand the impact of pre arrival experiences on refugee students and how these will influence their learning needs.
- Discuss the fact that some of the material presented might be upsetting, especially for participants who are themselves from a refugee background.
- Establish some group rules if people become upset (eg quietly leave the room).
- Ensure there is a referral mechanism to counselling support in case the need arises.

*Display slide 2: Session 1 Introduction*

- Tell participants that this session will look at some of the pre-arrival experiences that refugee students in Australia are likely to have undergone. It will focus on the types of persecution they may have suffered in their home countries that caused them to flee as refugees and will explore the likely impact of these experiences on children and young people’s ability to integrate into a new society and into the school community.
- Explain that the concept of resilience will be discussed and the need for that resilience to be fostered will be emphasized.
Play Surviving War, Surviving Peace Introduction and Session 1

• Allow a few minutes to debrief about the content of the video.
• Ask the participants to discuss how they feel about the material presented, asking each person to name one feeling, making sure that they are not intellectualizing the content.
• Ask if people were aware that so many refuge children and young people had survived such experiences.
• Highlight the strength of these refugees, many of whom are doing so well in Australia.
• Discuss the fact that while they are settling well, many hold these experiences just below the surface, and that sometimes they burst out.

Display slide 3
(This slide is referenced to Session 1 background readings, Section a.)

Use the following notes to present the concept of surviving peace:
• Most refugees, including children, survive horrors which most of us can not begin to imagine.
• Not only do they survive, they overcome huge obstacles, protect their families, maintain their culture, and build new lives for themselves.
• Resilience is recognizable in refugee young people it has to be nurtured.
• Schools can take an important role in this nurturing process.

Display slide 4
(This slide is referenced to Session 1 background readings, Section b.)

Use the following notes to explain why refuges flee their country of origin:
• There are many reasons why refugees flee from their country of origin. The most common factors include:
  – suffering from extreme persecution
  – not returning home as their lives would be in danger
  – being unfairly imprisoned and
  – not receiving protection from their Government.
• Refugees also flee from:
  – long civil wars
  – repressive government regimes
  – persecution because of their religious political or social beliefs, or because of their ethnicity.
• Civilians, including children, are targeted for human rights abuses including torture.
Use the following notes to describe the kinds of experiences refugee children have survived:

- Refugee children in Australia have commonly survived things such as:
  - Malnutrition
  - Sickness and injury
  - Poverty
  - Disrupted education
  - Loss of parental and community protection
  - Witnessing their homes and communities bombed
  - Having to literally run for their lives
  - Witnessing family members killed or raped
  - Experiencing violence themselves, including rape
  - Being separated from their parents, often for years.
  - Having had to leave family members and friends behind in appalling camps and in danger.
  - Not knowing if their family is alive or dead.

Tell participants that we do not know and may never know what refugee children have experienced but if we know that they are from a refugee background, we need to be sensitive to the possibility that they have survived some or all of these things and that those experiences will impact on their ability to settle and integrate into a new home country.

Refugee children survive many experiences including:
- having to walk for days with whatever possessions they can carry
- having to pay bribes to border guards
- surviving attack by armed military
- abuse by police and other authority figures
- staying in dangerous places with little food or water
- watching family members die of malnutrition or exhaustion
- having to make long, dangerous journeys in unsafe, overcrowded boats.
Display slide 8
(This slide is referenced to Session 1 background readings, Section e.)

Use the following notes to present the experiences of refugees in camps:

- People in refugee camps commonly suffer:
  - lack of secure shelter
  - disruption of normal family routines
  - dependence on UNHCR and NGOs for food rations

- Camps are also dangerous places where refugees experience:
  - poor physical security and lack of privacy
  - armed attacks which may involve the rape or abduction of women and children
  - violence, particularly sexual violence against women and children
  - abuse by officials and members of the local population
  - physical hardship, poor health and psychological stress
  - shortage of food and medical treatment
  - scarcity of water, in particular safe drinking water.

Activity

- Break the participants into small groups and hand out the copies of the Power Point slides
- Ask each group to list the four refugee experiences that made the greatest impact on them and to discuss and note the possible implications and reactions to the experience which may manifest itself in refugee students resettled to Australia.

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<th>Refugee experience</th>
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- Ask each group to share its four points and list the issues that emerge on butchers paper.
- Keep this list on the wall for reference in later sessions.
Display slide 9

- Briefly summarise discussion
- Reiterate that teachers and counsellors can play a key role in nurturing resilience
- Reiterate the fact that nurturing resilience will lead to better learning outcomes
- Encourage the group to discuss the hurdles they will face if they accept this challenge.

List these hurdles on butchers paper and put it with the first list.