



JRS MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT:
Current Operations and 2020 - 2023 Strategy

Displacement

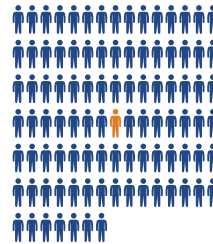
For the past decade, forced displacement has continued to rise reaching **epic proportions**, according to UNHCR,¹ The UN Refugee Agency.

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) envisions a world where refugees and other forcibly displaced people attain protection, opportunity, and participation. JRS seeks to accompany, serve, and advocate the cause of forcibly displaced people, that they may heal, learn, and determine their own future.



79.5 million

More than 79.5 million people are displaced by war, conflict, persecution, and natural disasters.



1 in 97²

People are currently displaced

The Effects of Displacement on Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing:



Forcibly displaced people are often exposed to many distressing experiences including witnessing or experiencing **violence, injury, death, loss of loved ones, and lack of access to basic needs including food, water, and shelter**



Exposure to such adversity compounded by the daily stressors in new and challenging environments impacts the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of displaced individuals and communities.

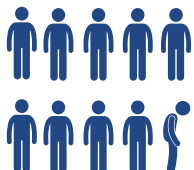
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) is used to describe a range of services that help people cope with distressing experiences.

Almost all people affected by emergencies will experience some level of distress, often exacerbated when mass displacement occurs due to the loss of the normal community structures. Most people can cope with this distress and may become more resilient if they receive the necessary supports.

Many countries exposed to natural disasters and war lack the necessary resources to properly respond to mental health needs of internally displaced populations, and most refugees are temporarily settled in neighboring countries that also lack these services.⁴



In conflict settings, **1 out of every 5 people** are living with a mental health condition ranging from mild depression or anxiety to psychosis.



Almost 1 out of every 10 people are living with a moderate or severe mental health condition.



JRS's MHPSS Response

In 2020, JRS conducted an internal survey of global MHPSS programming. The survey showed:

In 2019, MHPSS programs served

159,274

refugees and displaced persons

in 46 countries

JRS implements more standalone MHPSS activities but it is frequently integrated into other sectors including Education, Child Protection, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, and Livelihoods

More than 2 out of every 3

JRS projects with MHPSS activities strive to and report on improving the wellbeing of individuals they support

Nearly 90%

of JRS projects around the world reported psychosocial support was an active component to their programming



MHPSS activities are predominantly implemented by social workers, trained community members, trained psychosocial staff, psychologists, and staff in other sectors that have received psychosocial support training



JRS's Most Frequently Provided MHPSS Activities⁵



73%

Activities that strengthen community and social support

JRS creates child-friendly, women friendly, and other safe spaces where people can rebuild connection through activities like art, theatre, games, and sports and other forms of recreation. JRS also supports cultural and spiritual activities and rituals amongst other ways of rebuilding community and social connection.



62%

Support Groups

Individuals come together at JRS run support groups through shared stories, and experiences, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness.



60%

Referrals to Specialized Mental Health Services

JRS staff determine if someone has a mental health condition that would benefit from psychological or psychiatric support and they link them with the appropriate provider as part of their care plan.



53%

Supporting Parents and Caregivers

JRS knows parents and caregivers play vital roles in their families and communities and provides support groups, psychoeducation, information, resources and supplies to empower them.



69%

Community Awareness Raising Activities

JRS shares important information with teachers, caregivers, and the broader community on distress reactions, how to cope, and how to help others cope.



60%

Individual Counseling

For those that need more focused or specialized supports, JRS provides individual counseling to empower people to cope and become their most resilient selves.



54%

Integrated into food, health, sanitation, education or other

JRS advocates that displaced people have access to their basic rights, services, and security in a dignified way that is safe and culturally appropriate. This includes helping people access legal counseling, the distribution of basic supplies, and other emergency assistance.



JRS MHPSS 2020 – 2023 Strategic Plan

JRS's MHPSS Priority, Goals, and Objectives will strengthen JRS's MHPSS current programming and lead to opportunities for growth while aligning with and contributing to global guidance and best practices.

Priority

Provision of quality individual, family, and community-based services to reduce suffering and improve mental health and psychosocial wellbeing

Goal

1

Strengthened multilayered MHPSS services through community participation and alignment with international standards.

Objective 1:

JRS has trained and experienced staff implementing layered MHPSS services

- ✓ Improve recruitment for MHPSS positions
- ✓ Established network of consultants
- ✓ Train all MHPSS staff
- ✓ Establish an internal MHPSS Community of Practice

Objective 2:

Region, Country, and Project teams feel they have adequate technical support to implement quality services that align with and contribute to international standards

- ✓ JRS projects receive support from Regional MHPSS Specialists
- ✓ JRS MHPSS field work is internationally recognized
- ✓ An MHPSS Advisory Committee supports the rollout of the strategy

Objective 3:

Projects demonstrate that MHPSS is participatory, effective, and sustainable

- ✓ Programs have the resources they need to effectively monitor and evaluate MHPSS services

Goal 2

MHPSS considerations are integrated into other JRS Core Priorities resulting in improved cross-sectoral outcomes

Objective 1:

An integrated approach for MHPSS considerations into other sectors is championed by all relevant stakeholders

- ✓ All JRS staff receive orientation on JRS's MHPSS approach
- ✓ JRS specific guidance is developed on integrating MHPSS activities into other priority areas of programming
- ✓ JRS staff across all departments and sectors are proficient in MHPSS knowledge

Objective 2:

MHPSS is considered in all phases of JRS project cycles

- ✓ Assessments address the mental health and psychosocial problems communities experience
- ✓ Annual plans address mental health and psychosocial needs identified
- ✓ MHPSS indicators are reported on when considerations are integrated into programs of other sectors



References:

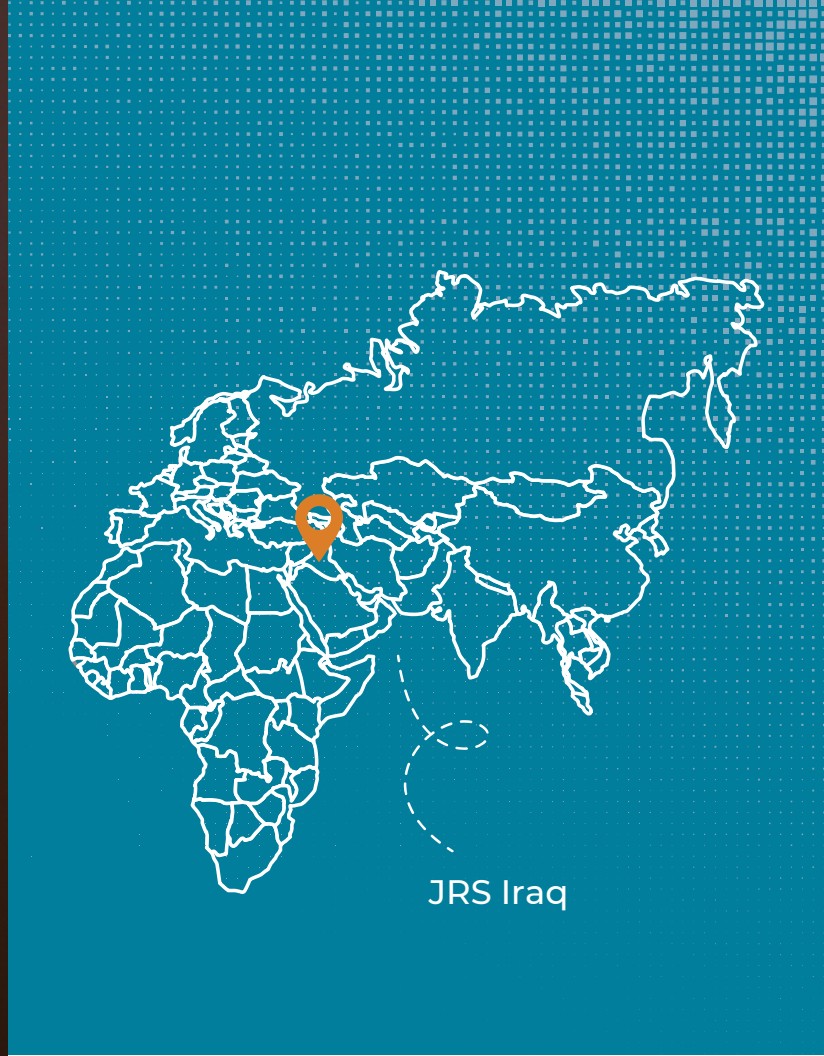
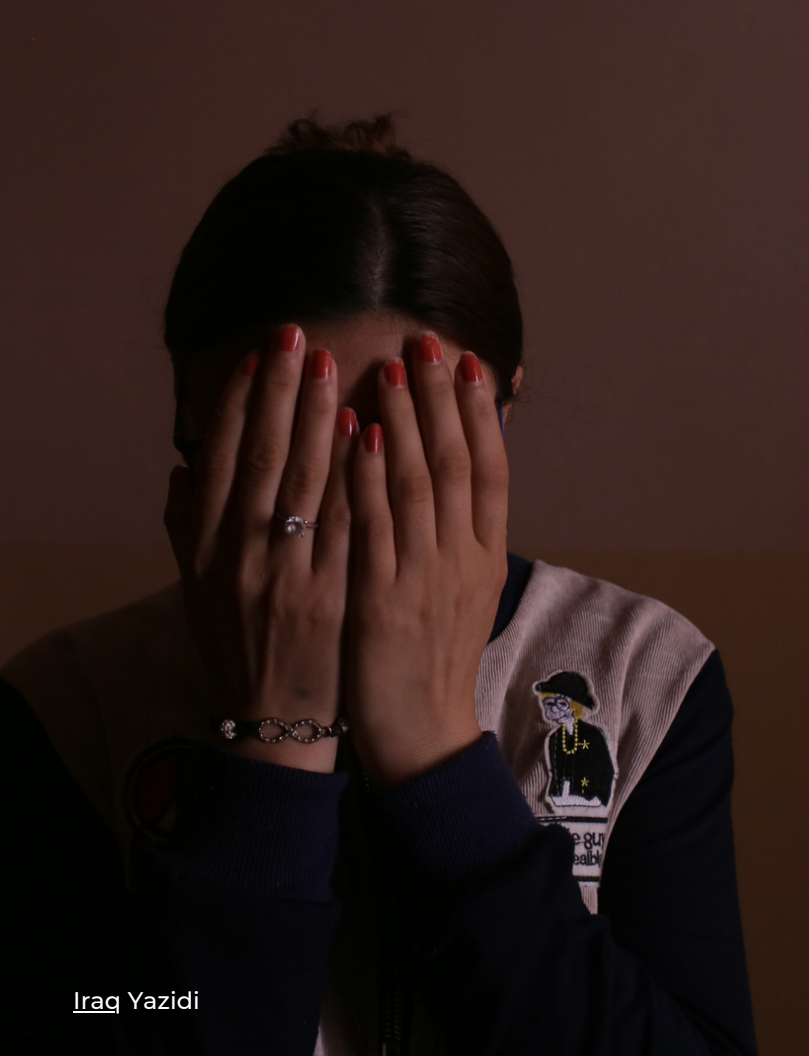
1. <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017/>
2. <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017>
3. Ommeren, M. (2019, June 11). Mental health conditions in conflict situations are much more widespread than we thought. Retrieved September 22, 2020, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/mental-health-conditions-in-conflict-situations-are-much-more-widespread-than-we-thought>
4. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies. (2019, June 12). Retrieved September 22, 2020, from https://www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/en/
5. Percentage of projects that reported these activities/



Uganda Teacher Training



JRS Uganda is leading the way by integrating psychosocial support into education by training primary and secondary teachers to provide psychosocial support in refugee settlements in northern Uganda as well as in Kampala. JRS and our teachers know that when students have psychosocial support, they feel better, and ultimately do better in school. In 2020 teachers were trained in basic psychosocial support, psychological first aid, social and emotional learning, and detection and referral of mental health needs to specialized service providers. Recognizing that teachers are under immense pressure and often coping with similar experiences as their students and their families, the training includes information on self-care. JRS's approach is currently being piloted and, in collaboration with a partner organization, the impacts of this approach will be researched and documented.



Iraq Yazidi

For many years, the Yazidi population in Iraq suffered genocide under the control of the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS). JRS provides professional counseling for survivors of the genocide and captivity to help them cope and overcome the long term psychological and emotional effects of mass murder, enslavement, forced conversion, and forced displacement. JRS Iraq has also developed a specific program for children (ages 5-18) freed from Isis captivity. In addition to counseling and psychiatric support, the children attend group therapy, recreation activities, and outdoor events. Their families or guardians also receive training on how to support them. With this support of JRS, and their families, children can recover from their experiences, and have the opportunity to be children once more.



Colombia



JRS Colombia

JRS Colombia has years of experience in providing mental health and psychosocial support, first to populations displaced by decades of internal conflict and now those forcibly displaced by the humanitarian disaster in Venezuela. JRS Colombia prevents mental health and psychosocial problems by restoring their rights and dignity through access to education, information, and legal assistance. They also address mental health and psychosocial support through services including home visits, counseling, conflict resolution, and family reunification. JRS Colombia also plays an active role in helping displaced communities integrate into local communities to develop a stronger united community.



South Sudan



JRS South Sudan

JRS South Sudan provides a range of mental health and psychosocial support activities for Sudanese refugees and the host community in Maban. They also constructed a safe community space for recreational activities and community events. These recreational activities include a team of peer-led students who practice martial arts and meditation at the center several times a week. The participants learn discipline, self-control, and are able to express themselves through physical activity and movement. Many also attend a JRS facilitated youth group where they they further develop essential life skills. The center also houses a JRS operated daycare where children with disabilities receive physiotherapy from trained refugee community workers and parents are taught how to develop their child's social, emotional, and cognitive development in ways specific to the child's needs.



JRS Thailand

At the Urban Refugee Project in Bangkok, JRS Thailand creates a welcoming environment where displaced asylum seekers and refugees, who are forced to live in the shadows out of fear of arrest and detention, can access safely access services. In addition to providing emergency assistance for people that are struggling to meet their basic needs including for rent, food, or medicine, JRS case workers also visit clients at home to check in on them and keep them from feeling isolated and alone. JRS psychologists provide individual and group counseling for people that need more support. They also host group awareness raising events to help people understand the effects of stress and how to cope and recreational activities like soccer matches that bring the community together for a moment of fun and joy.



Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organization serving refugees and other forcibly displaced people. JRS's mission is to accompany, serve, and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, that they may heal, learn, and determine their own future. Founded as a work of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1980, JRS today works in More than 56 countries worldwide to meet the educational, health, and social needs of more than 750,000 refugees.