

Danish Refugee Council, 29th October 2019

Integration of refugees in Denmark and working with persons affected by trauma

Presentation

1. The Danish Refugee Council – and DRC Integration
2. Reception and integration of refugees in Denmark
3. Working with persons affected by trauma
4. The issue of culture

Questions and discussion along the way

Dansk Flygtningehjælp

DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

Danish Refugee Council

Established in 1956 to support refugees from Hungary. Today, the largest Danish NGO with programs in 36 countries worldwide.

In Denmark, we cooperate with government, municipalities, and public institutions for provision of integration services. We carry out advocacy. We provide counselling for asylum seekers.



Vision, mission and values

VISION

**A DIGNIFIED LIFE
FOR ALL DISPLACED**

MISSION

**We assist refugees and the displaced,
protect their rights and empower them
towards a better future**

VALUES

Humanitarian approach

- people's right to a life with dignity takes precedence over politics and principles.

Respect

- for the equal rights of human beings

Independence and neutrality

- in regard to our surroundings

Inclusion

- of the people we work to help

Honesty and transparency

- for all beneficiaries, donors, partners and others

Integration Department – 500 employees + 8,000 volunteers

Lærdansk



DF DANSK
FLYGTNINGE
HJÆLP
FRIVILLIG

Integrationsnet

En del af Dansk Flygtningehjælp

FLYGTNINGE
HJÆLPENS
TOLKESERVICE

In Denmark

Asylum advice

- All asylum seekers are entitled to independent advice during the asylum procedure
- We provide advice and counselling both at the asylum centers, at Borbergsgade once a week, and on video-conference

Repatriation advice

- Both to the local social workers, and to the refugees who are considering returning home
- In 2018 (Jan - Nov): 163 refugees and 169 migrants returned home

Lærdansk

Language Schools

- 13 language schools in Denmark
- Refugees, migrants, foreign workers with their families and students.
- Refugees are entitled to 5 years of free Danish lessons. All others have to pay for their classes.
- We teach both in regular classes, at workplaces and on the internet - e-learning.
- Special offers for young unaccompanied refugees. Youth classes with 30 hours of weekly instruction in Danish and other school subjects, internships and summer camp.

Integrationsnet

Specialized integration services

- Reception of refugees, activation, job-searching, rehabilitation, family therapy and psychosocial support, supported housing for unaccompanied minors
- 100 specialists (psychologists, educators, social workers, job consultants, teachers, etc.) are employees of Integrationsnet
- The municipalities are responsible for the integration programs of all newcomers. They buy specialized assistance from Integrationsnet.

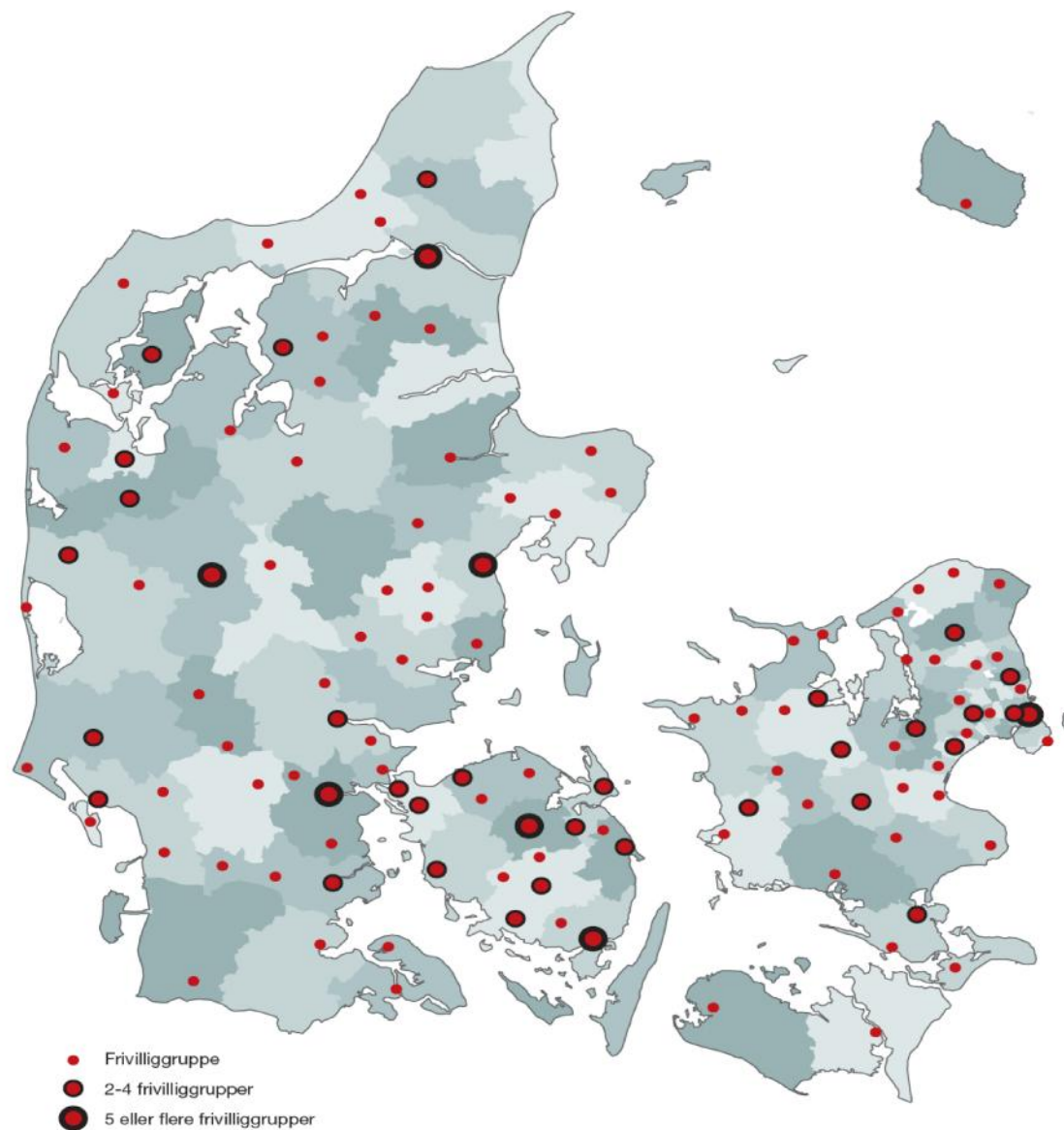
Volunteer Department



- Support for 8,500 volunteers in 240+ voluntary groups across the country
- Activities such as: Language training, coaching, mentoring programs, job search, contact families/-persons, youth-to-youth groups and counselling

Voluntary groups in Denmark

Activities in 80 municipalities



Advocacy

- Strong advocacy position.
- We are invited to bring our knowledge and solutions to the politicians and civil servants in the ministries
- We make responses on all new legislation on foreigners/refugees in Denmark
- We create general awareness about refugees in Denmark
- Our youth network DFUNK has a strong position

Knowledge Center for Vulnerable Refugees

- We provide knowledge and skills for teachers, educators, social workers, etc. working with vulnerable refugees in their daily work
- Method development, new knowledge and teaching
- Focus: Providing knowledge and thus good reception of vulnerable refugees in municipalities – special competence in traumatized refugees (PTSD)

Center
for
Udsatte
Flygtninge

Training of professionals (and volunteers)

- Reception and legislation
- Employment
- Working multi-/interdisciplinary
- Trauma and PTSD
- Families, children & youth
- Intercultural competences
- Gender equality
- Collaboration with volunteers

DRC's Integration Circle



- A dignified life as a vision for integration activities: Support and enable refugees and migrants to be part of a community and to enjoy equal rights and opportunities in Denmark.
- Language proficiency, employment, participation in civil society, and an inclusive society are pivotal for the quality of life, empowerment and future possibilities of refugees and migrants.
- Meeting the individual with a focus on resources.

INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES IN DENMARK

Denmark: facts and figures

Number of asylum applicants and residence permits

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Asylum applicants	3,806	6,148	7,557	14,792	21,316	6,266	3,479	3,523	1,676 (1 Sep)
Residence permits	2,249	2,583	3,889	6,104	10,849	7,494	2,749	1,652	1,069 (1 Sep)

Nationality of asylum applicants

	Country	2015	2016	2017	2018
1	Syria	8,608	1,253	864	604
2	Iran	2,787	300	148	195
3	Afghanistan	2,331	1,127	188	151
4	Eritrea	1,740	274	355	680
5	Stateless	1,734	491	138	149
6	Iraq	1,537	452	145	119

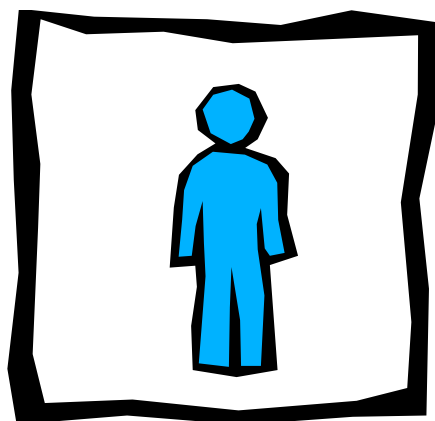
Before 2015: Also many from Somalia

In 2019: Eritrea and Syria

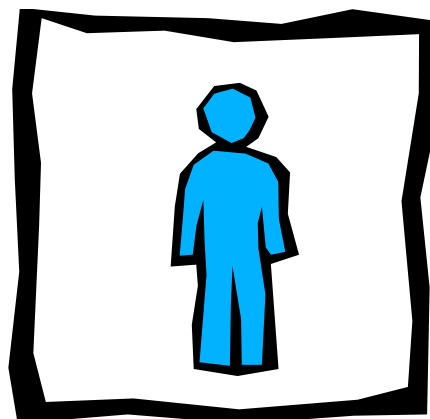
Refugees and the Aliens Act

- Convention status: Risk persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion
- Protection status: Risk of death penalty, torture, inhumane and degrading treatment
- Temporary protection status: Cannot return due to war or conflict.
- no right to family reunification within the first 3 years.

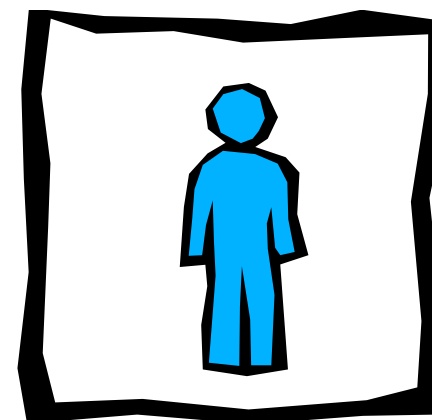
Permanent residence is far away



Temporary residence permit – everyone!



Permanent residence permit can be applied for after 8 years



Citizenship
Can be applied for after 8 years



The Danish Integration Act

Quota system dispersing refugees to (almost) all municipalities

5 year integration program (max.) for refugees

Responsibility of municipalities – individual integration plans

Aim: employment and economic self-sufficiency

Entitlements:

- Free Danish language tuition (up to five years)
- Social assistance benefit (in accordance with Danish Social Law)
- Affordable housing – temporary
- Health care, mental and social care (trauma rehabilitation etc.)

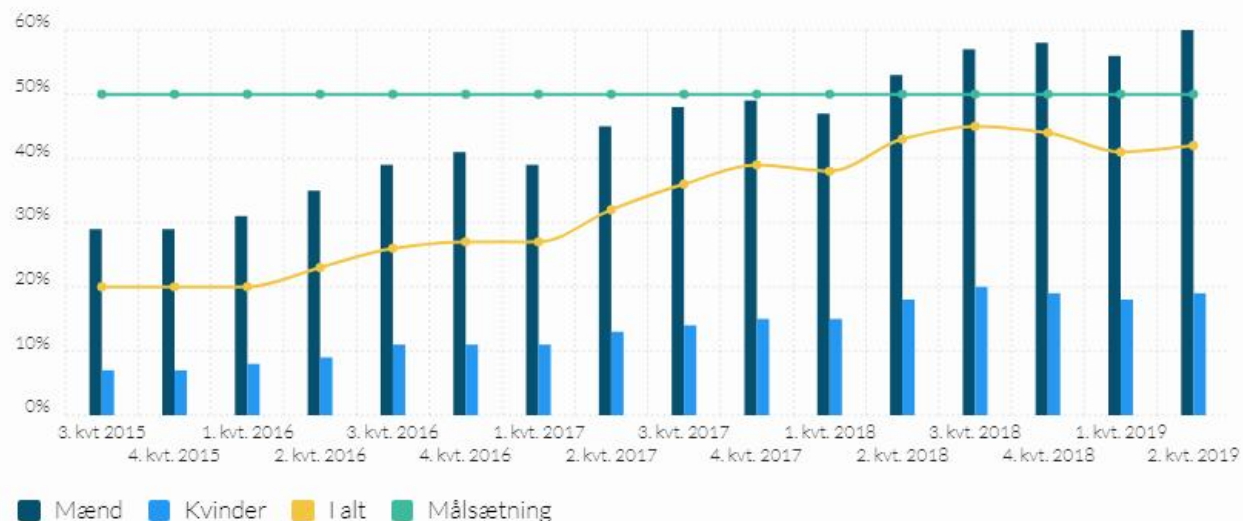
Obligations – 37 hours per week:

- Attend language and cultural orientation training and pass test
- Actively participate in employment promoting schemes

Employment figures are good – but gender gap

Refugees in employment after 3 years:

Andel af 21-64-årige flygtninge og familiesammenførte til flygtninge i lønmodtagerbeskæftigelse efter 3 år i Danmark, 2. kv. 2015-2. kv. 2019, pct.



Source: *Det Nationale Integrationsbarometer, Ministry for Immigration and Integration*

REFUGEES AFFECTED BY TRAUMA

Homs

(The Guardian 2014)



All refugees are shocked

- Extreme conditions
- Brutal events
- Losses
- Fundamental changes
- Cultural differences
- Minority
- Client



Some refugees are affected by what they have been through in a way that affects their mental health and life in exile.



Hospital in Aleppo



Why focus on refugees with trauma?

- 30-45% of refugees have trauma-related symptoms (DK-estimate)
- 13-25% of refugees in high-income countries have PTSD
- Employment rate in Denmark for refugees being treated for PTSD is below 10%
- Refugees receiving treatment for PTSD (in DK) have, on average, lived in Denmark for 14½ years
- Measures to identify trauma are in need of improvement

Trauma as part of the picture – holistic approach



Symptoms of trauma and PTSD

Invasive thoughts, feelings and images

- Flashbacks
- Inner images
- Nightmares

Avoidance behaviour

- Overly focus on job/studies
- Isolation
- Avoiding intimacy and social contact
- Avoiding sensory input and situations resembling traumatic experience

Constant state of alert

- Increased arousal
- Violent reactions to small changes
- Difficulty finding peace and concentrating



Detecting trauma

Protect Questionnaire

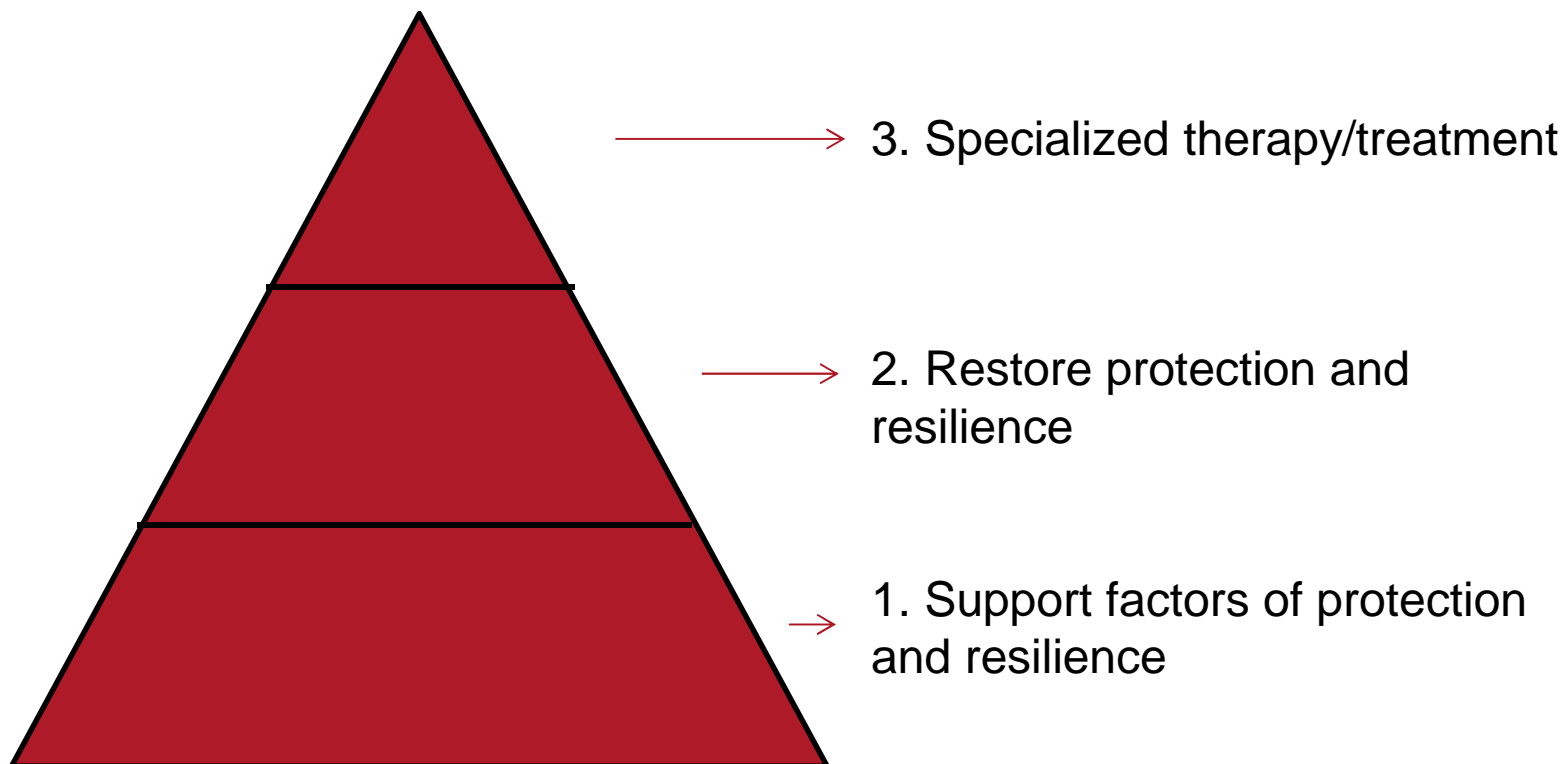
- Developed by seven European organisations
- For professionals and volunteers working with asylum applicants and refugees

Questions		Yes	No
<i>"Often" means : more than usual and causing suffering</i>			
1	Do you often have problem falling asleep ?		
2	Do you often have nightmares ?		
3	Do you often suffer from headaches ?		
4	Do you often suffer from other physical pains ?		
5	Do you easily get angry ?		
6	Do you often think about painful past events ?		
7	Do you often feel scared or frightened ?		
8	Do you often forget things in your daily life ?		
9	Do you find yourself losing interest in things ?		
10	Do you often have trouble concentrating ?		
Number of questions answered "Yes" →			

Rating :
Please mark the proper category with an X to indicate the level of risk of traumatisatation

0-3	4-7	8-10
Low risk	Medium risk	High risk

Various levels of supportive interventions



Trauma, PTSD, and treatment in Denmark

- Right to free treatment for PTSD
- Specialized rehabilitation centers in all regions
- Referral via GP

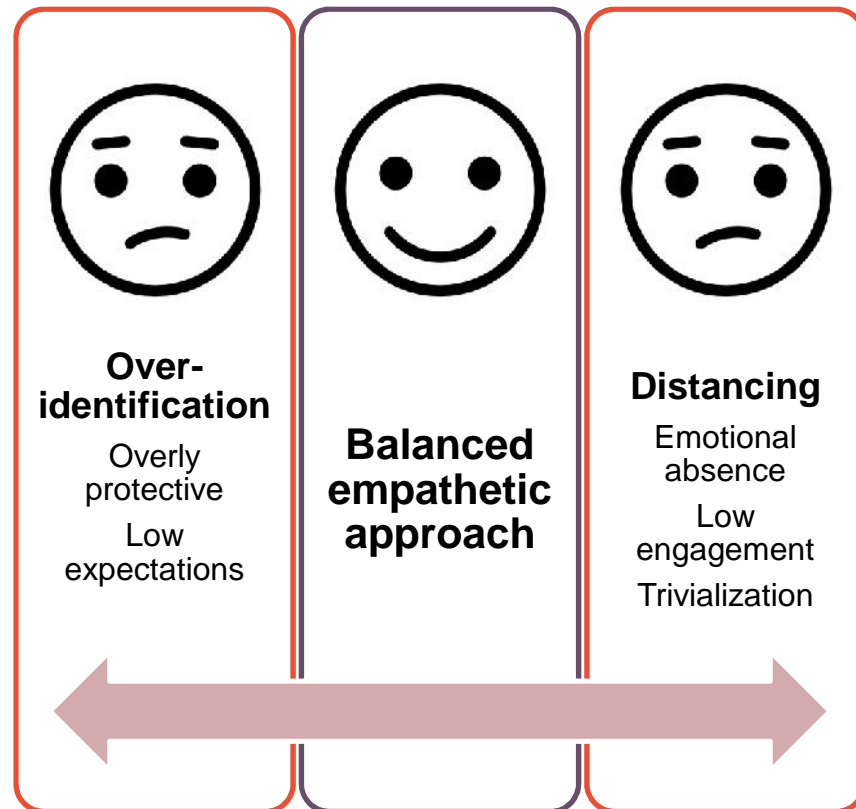
How to engage with vulnerable refugees?

- Traumas imply internal chaos – activities should contribute to external structure
 - *Sense of security, structure, routines, personal boundaries, communication*

- Meet refugees as individuals, not as diagnoses
 - *Avoid stigmatization, reactions to trauma vary significantly, refugees with trauma have resources too, accommodate to individual needs, boost (self)confidence*

Engaging with self-awareness

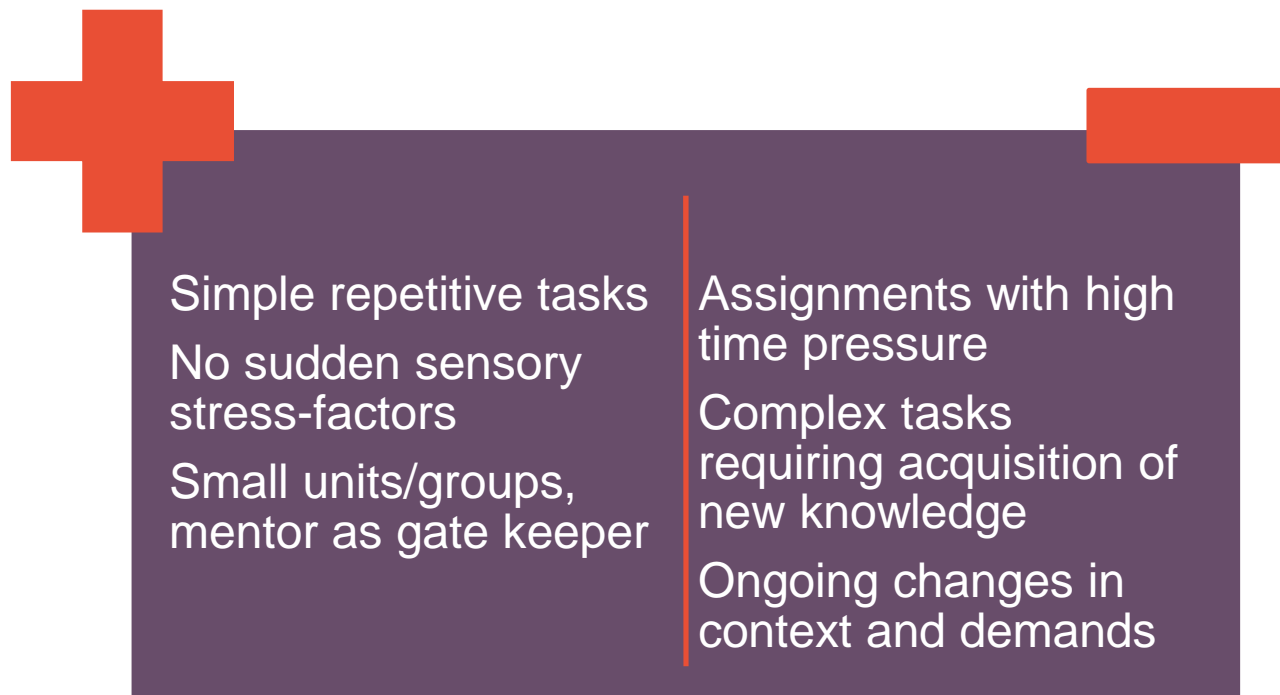
- Keep focus on your job/function
- Avoid counter-transference
- Be aware of how you feel and react – and talk about it with colleagues or supervisor



Activities, education, employment...

Language education, going to school, to work – if possible – is important and beneficial to vulnerable and traumatized refugees

- *Daily activities, social community, inclusion, meaning*



Secondary traumatisation

- Inter-generational transfer of trauma
- Children develop a 'radar' for what the parents can or cannot handle
- Fear of parents' sudden outbursts of anger
- Experiencing parents' flashbacks, nightmares and anxiety
- Fragments of parents' history of trauma
- Effects of the parents' contact with the home country – the continuous effects of the persecution/struggle/war
- Parents' trauma affect their ability to take care of family and children



Reception and conditions in exile are crucial for healing and well-being

Risk factors:

- Uncertainty about asylum and stay
- Separation from family
- Lack of network
- Low socio-economic status i exile
- Loss of status
- Language barriers
- Perceived discrimination



Protective factors:

- Family reunification
- Social network
- Employment
- Language proficiency
- Permanent housing
- Access to health services

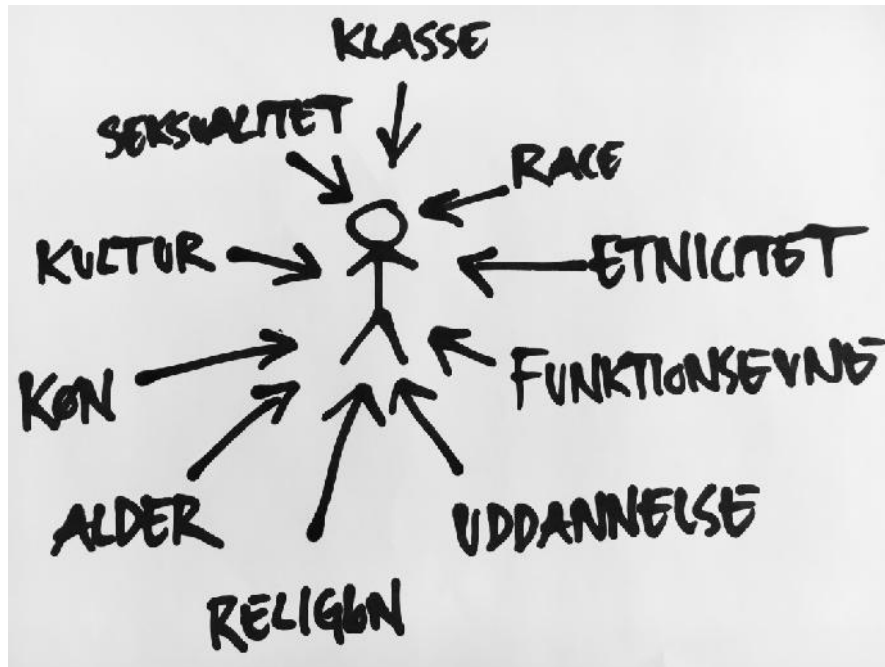
Theoretical approaches

DRC Integration teach and practice e.g.:

- **STROF Model** for working with children and their parents e.g. in daycare and schools (Lars Gustafsson):
Structure, Talking with the child, Rituals, Organised activities and Parental Collaboration
- **NMT** – Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (Bruce Perry)
- **Narrative Exposure Therapy** (Schauer, M., Neuner, F., Elbert T.)
- Neuroaffective approaches (Susan Hart)

THE ISSUE OF 'CULTURE'

Refugees: diverse group, individuals



- Diversity
- Complexity
- Intersections
- Various countries of origin
- Multi-faceted backgrounds and identities

Concepts of culture

Narrow/descriptive

One country, one nation, one language
Static



- Seeks commonalities between people with same cultural background
- Understands behaviour in view of cultural background
- Notion of homogenous national culture

Broad/complex

Creates - and created by - people
Constant transformation
Continuous negotiation



- Does not generalise on basis of cultural background
- Understands behaviour also in view of age, gender, socio-economic background, etc.
- Sees behaviour in view of context – family, work, leisure time, etc.



Ethnocentrism vs. cultural relativism

Ethnocentrism: the view that one's own culture is better than anyone else's. Evaluating other cultures from the perspective of one's own.

Human rights based approach: Normatively based on international human rights standards and aiming to promote and protect human rights.

Cultural relativism: Values, knowledge, and behavior of people must be understood within their own cultural context. Cultures are equal, and different from each other. Risk of essentialism.

Cultural encounters

How do we meet people, we consider to be different from ourselves?

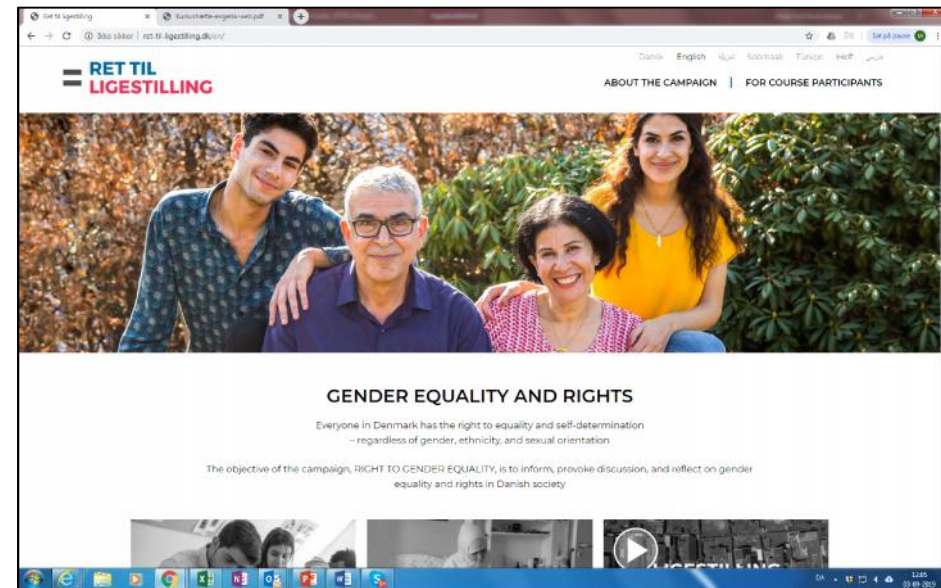
Awareness of:

1. Preunderstanding of 'the other'
2. Understanding of oneself
3. Various differences and *similarities* – when is 'culture' a relevant marker of difference?

Knowledge is pivotal – gender equality as example

Dialogue- and information activities for women in religious (only) marriages

- ✓ Tender by the Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI)
- ✓ Background: Some women stuck in religious marriages (such as nikah)
- ✓ Religious marriages may imply unequal rights, and have no legal validity in Denmark
- ✓ Courses and counselling about marriage-rights according to Danish law
- ✓ Plan to reach 2,000 women (2019-20)



Thank you

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