

Torture and War Trauma

Information for Survivors



Refugees have suffered greatly because of the wars in their homelands.

Many were victims of brutal actions by armies, clans, and gangs. There are refugees who continue to suffer because of these experiences they did not deserve. They feel pain in their bodies or act differently than they did before the war because of the horrible things that happened to them.

If you had harmful things done to you during the war, you may now have problems with sleeping or eating or with the way you feel. You may:

- have bad dreams at night or have trouble sleeping
- be losing or gaining weight
- feel sad or angry or without hope
- be forgetful or not able to pay attention
- feel as if you cannot control your thoughts and memories

These things that are happening to you are normal. They do not mean you are going "crazy" or have a permanent mental illness.

Everyone has one of these problems sometime. But if you have 2 or 3 of these problems, or have even one that gives you trouble and makes it hard to get through the day, tell someone so that you may receive help. In the United States, there is help for people who are having problems because of bad things that happened to them in the past.

Where can you go for help?

If you have some of these problems, you can talk to a community worker or medical worker at the agency where you obtained this brochure. He (or she) can assist you in finding the resources you need.

Can a friend help or can you get better by yourself?

Yes, if you have a wise and understanding friend who is willing to listen to you, you may not need professional help. However, you have special challenges here and may need to talk to a person who has been trained to help people who have been hurt by events of war. You may even need some medicine. Even one session with a skilled professional may be of assistance.

There are things you can do to help yourself get better. It is important to take care of your health. It is good to have regular medical examinations, to eat regularly, and to get enough sleep. Regular physical exercise helps to relieve stress. Reduce and/or control how much alcohol you drink. Allow time for your recovery. Be patient with yourself.

You have survived a lot of suffering and you deserve to have help so that you feel better.