


National Capacity Building Project: Technical Assistance of the Survivor of Torture Programs


The Asylum Process: Interdisciplinary Responses to Multifaceted Challenges

April 16, 2023

Challenges in Service Provision for Asylum Seekers



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Challenges in Service Provision for Asylum Seekers: Recently Arrived Asylum Seekers

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NYC Mayor
Eric Adams

May 23, 2023

“When I speak with my asylum seekers...they state clearly, ‘We don’t want your free room and board and food and clothing, we want to work. We want to have an opportunity to provide for ourselves.’ And right now we are denying that opportunity by refusing to let them work legally. It is creating an underground market where individuals could be exploited, unable to pay into our tax base, working long and difficult and dangerous jobs because they are living in the shadow of the American dream and not out front. It increases the risk that they can be abused. It is one of the major goals we must accomplish.”

Legal Hurdles = Life in Limbo

1. May (or may not) have been admitted or paroled
 - a. **Form I-94** = Admitted or Paroled
 - b. **Form I-220(a)** = Released on Recognizance (“Bajo Palabra”)
 - i. Watch this space: ROR “may be” a Parole
2. May (or may not) have Immigration Court with EOIR
 - a. May have been “charged” by DHS/ICE, yet still not have “court” with DOJ/EOIR
 - i. **Notice to Appear (NTA)** = DHS Charging Document
 - b. <https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/en/> (Google Search: “eoir info”)
 - c. ICE Check-in Court
3. Cannot work until authorized with a physical Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card in-hand
 - a. Step One: Apply for Asylum
 - b. Step Two: **Wait - 150 Days**
 - c. Step Three: Apply for EAD
 - d. Step Four: Wait - 30+ Days

Social

- A. Xenophobia on the Outside, Conformity on the Inside
- B. Lies, Damn Lies, and TikTok
- C. Dependence on Others = Debt
 - a. Food & Lodging
 - b. Transportation & Childcare
 - c. Interpretation & Translation
 - d. Navigating Institutions and Systems


Health & Behavioral Health

- A. Ongoing Trauma
 - a. Recent & Revived Memories
 - b. Survivor's Guilt & Family Separation
 - c. Disorientation & Loss of Agency

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Asylum Seekers in the Affirmative Backlog: Psychosocial Concerns

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Social Concerns

- Family Separation
- Financial Hardship
- Inadequate Housing/Homelessness
- Transportation Costs & Food Insecurity
- Exploitative Employment
- Barriers to Healthcare
- Starting a Family & Having Children
- Lack of Childcare
- Lack of Benefits/No Pell Grants
- Loss of Loved-Ones in Home Country

Clinical Concerns

- Fear for family safety in home country & guilt
- Complicated Grief – Cannot care for dying loved-ones or mourn loss with family/community.
- Constant fear of deportation and returning to danger. Living with a “black cloud over my head”.
- Denial – Clients building careers & starting families and coping well. PTSD symptoms return when given an interview/hearing date.
- “My life is not moving forward”. Cannot afford university or move out of state.
- Compare and Despair – Client sees other people being granted asylum before them.
- Anger – “No one is helping me”. Who to trust?
- Traumatic Amnesia & Dissociation

Interventions

- Progress in mental health is difficult when crisis is ongoing. Therapy and/or medication
- Communicate with legal team. Provide clarification. Support the legal process.
- Client may need information repeatedly.
- Ask client what brings them comfort. Encourage it.
- Ask client about their spiritual life.
- Bear witness to your client’s pain.

Questions?

Have a question or something you want to discuss more in-depth? Here are some options for you:

- Type your questions in the Q&A, or
- Type your questions in the chat, or
- Raise your hand using the reaction button.


Have a questions after the presentation? Here is the contact information for our presenters:

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Thank you for attending this NCB virtual training!

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The National Capacity Building Project is a project of the Center for Victims of Torture in partnership with Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma and the National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs.



More resources are available at www.healtorture.org.

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