

Factors That Affect the Mental Health Status of Syrian Refugee Girls in Post-Resettlement Context

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Abstract : Exposure to war and forced migration have been widely linked to child subsequent adaptation. What remains sparse is research spanning multiple risk and protective factors and examining their unique and relative implications to difficulties in mental health among refugee girls. This study investigated the mechanisms through which posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), emotion dysregulation, neuroticism, and behavioral and emotional disorders in Syrian refugee girls is impacted by exposure to war traumas, age, and other risk and protective factors such as coping styles, family relationships, and school environment. The sample consisted of 539 Syrian refugee girls who ranged in age from 7 to 18 years attending public schools in various governorates in Lebanon and Jordan. Two school counselors carried out the interviews with children at school. Results indicated that war trauma, older age, and a combination of negative coping style associated with conflict in the family could lead to an overall state of emotion dysregulation, neuroticism, behavioral and emotional disorders, and PTSD in refugee girls. On the other hand, lapse of time since resettlement in host country, positive coping style, cohesion, and expressiveness in the family would lead to more positive mental health status, including lower levels of emotion dysregulation, neuroticism, behavioral and emotional disorders, and PTSD. Enhanced understanding of the mechanistic role of risk and protective factors in contributing to difficulties in mental health in refugee girls may contribute to the development of effective interventions to target the psychological effects of the refugee experience.

Keywords : refugee girls, PTSD, emotion dysregulation, neuroticism, behavioral and emotional disorders

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