

Oasis in the Desert: Building Pathways to Occupational and Community Participation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Tumultuous Times

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Introduction: Nearly 65 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced as a result of persecution or political conflict. The population suffering forced migration is at a record high, with recent global crises resulting in unimaginable daily life challenges. Countless refugees are at high risk of occupational deprivation, having survived turbulent migration, torture and prolonged confinement in refugee camps. Contentious political environments are likely to further limit occupational participation for refugees seeking peace and stability.

Learning Objectives: Demonstrate understanding of refugees' lived experiences of occupational deprivation.

Identify skills for working with refugee survivors of torture, refugees with disabilities, and LGBTQ refugees.

Describe collaborative community-based strategies to enhance occupational and community participation among refugee groups

Methods/Approach: This workshop will share three collaborative community-based projects focused on enhancing occupational and community participation among refugees and asylum seekers. We will use didactic slides, interactive discussion, and video-based case studies to highlight key points for an audience of up to a 100.

Clinical Content: The workshop will cover three projects including an established occupational therapy program with survivors of state sponsored torture, participatory strategies for creating community supports for LGBTQ refugees and asylees, and a three-year initiative focusing on the development, field testing, and dissemination of a comprehensive vocational assessment and employment training program to improve employment options for refugees with disabilities. Group and individual based interventions designed to address occupational challenges as well as strategies to maximize inherent strengths and skills will be described. Partnerships between the distinct projects will be illustrated.