

# Psychological and Emotional Support for Refugee Children

by:  
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## Abstract

As one of the most efficient tools regarding children's rights, CRC articles reinforce children's right to care under a wide scope: Article 19 (Protection from all forms of violence), Article 24 (Health and Health services), Article 25 (Review of treatment in care) Article 31 (Leisure, play and culture), Article 39 (Rehabilitation of child victims) and Article 22 (Refugee children). More attention is needed when children are confronted with hard circumstances. Armed conflicts, natural disasters, starvation and wars force children into hard living conditions. Therefore, refugee children who are now living in Germany and have experienced both armed conflicts and forced displacement need special care. Refugee children are human rights holders and enjoy the same rights as other children all over the world. Throughout my voluntary work experience in Berlin, I noticed the absence of psychological and emotional support projects for refugee children, compared to social events in which children play, dance, sing and eat.

Ensuring refugees enjoy a good mental health is one of the issue's dimensions that is being ignored or not properly attended to. Silove, Rees and Ventevogel (2017) explain how the responsibility of providing mental health services is shared between international NGOs and voluntary organizations, yet services provided are insufficient. Betancourt, Charrow and Ohki (2013) explain how little attention is given to mental health and preserving good psychological conditions for children affected by war.

Arriving at a new destination doesn't mean the end of the journey for refugees because in their new home different challenges are waiting for them. Spending time with children and talking to them about general matters made me learn how their experiences shape their personality, beliefs and feelings. Silove, Rees and Ventevogel (2017) discuss how past experiences and daily stress that refugees are confronted with, shapes their current mental health situation: "In addition to the effects of past trauma, refugees commonly confront important challenges and stressors in their new environment, including ongoing insecurity, restricted access to essential services (health, mental health, education) lack of opportunities for employment, and more generally, host society attitudes of racism and xenophobia, death, disappearances and separations result in persisting grief and loss". (Silove, Rees, Ventevogel, 2017, pp. 135).

My focus was to invisibly provide psychological and emotional support, using creative arts and particularly stories and drawings. Michel Williams mentioned a very impressive sentence in his study on storytelling saying that: "stories are both a mirror and a window onto what it means to be human" (Williams, 2009, pp.8). Furthermore, Pay Myers in her article on storytelling explained that: "Storytelling connects. It connects children with history, families and each other" (Myers, 2012).