

## Vic TESOL Professional Learning Presentation

### Supporting students and families of Afghan background

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### Sharing the space

- Respect for each other
- Look after self
- Use the chat function to ask questions or make comments
- A little tech patience



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### How Foundation House works with schools



- Counselling and groupwork for children, young people, individuals and families
- Afghan Community Response Project
- Professional and organisational development
- Secondary consultations
- School Support programs
- Resources for teachers
- Research & Advocacy


**Our Mission**  
To advance the health, wellbeing and human rights of people from refugee backgrounds who have experienced torture or other traumatic events

VFST 1987



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### Afghan Community Response Project



- Counselling (brief intervention)
- Advocacy
- Community psycho education sessions with CAs
- Wellbeing check-ins
- Support settlement/legal needs
- Connect with relevant services
- Facilitate information sessions based on needs

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### Key message 1

Provide assistance by prioritising wellbeing and connection with students and families of Afghan background.



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### Key message 2

Continue to acknowledge what is happening in Afghanistan and during settlement and communicate your solidarity with families and the community.



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### Key message 3

Engage MEAs and trusted staff members to support students and families, being mindful of the wellbeing and capacity of staff.



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### Afghanistan Context – Country Information

- 43 years of conflict
- Several regime changes:
  - Communist & Soviets (1978 -1992)
  - Mujahedin - (1992 – 1996)
  - Taliban (1996 – 2001)
  - Democracy, USA & allies intervention (2001 – 2021)
  - Taliban (Aug 2021 - ....)
- Mass atrocities, mass killings, suicide attacks and oppression (minorities and women), gender-based violence
- Waves of migration and refugees

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## Presentation by Zahra Mousawai & Zamarai Samim

Community Project Workers  
Foundation House  
Afghan Community Response Project

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## Cultural diversity / different experience of trauma

- Ethnic/cultural group – Hazara, Pashtun, Tajik and others
- Languages: Dari, Pashto, Hazaragi and others
- Collective culture
- Impact of conflict and persecution varies
  - Rural vs Urban
  - Pashtuns experiences in south and east
  - Persecuted minorities (Hazaras, Sikhs, women)

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## Impacts of Taliban Takeover August 2021

- Leaving behind everything
- Ongoing fear & concern for family, friends/colleagues left behind
- Airport chaos – physical and psychological impacts
- Shattered hope
- Persecution of specific groups:
  - Women, ethnic & Religious minorities, former govt staff, and others...
- Genocide, door to door searches, arrests

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## Educational Background

- School and education system in Afghanistan
  - Curriculum
  - Grading system
  - Private and public schools
- New arrival's educational background
  - Middle class and elite from Kabul
  - ADF Interpreters and their families from Uruzgan Province

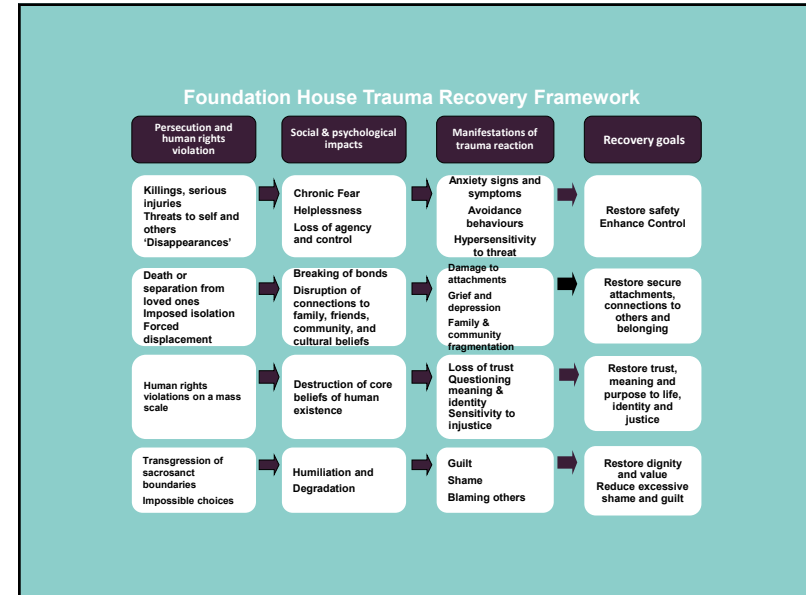
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## Settlement Experience in Australia



- Hotel Quarantine
- Short term accommodations –
- Long term housing issues
- Visa – subclass 449
  - Temporary visa
- Family split apart
- Navigating and understanding the services

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## Foundation House Recovery Goals



Restore safety & enhance control	Restore secure attachments, connection and belonging
Restore trust, meaning and purpose to life, identity and justice	Restore dignity and value, reduce excessive shame and guilt

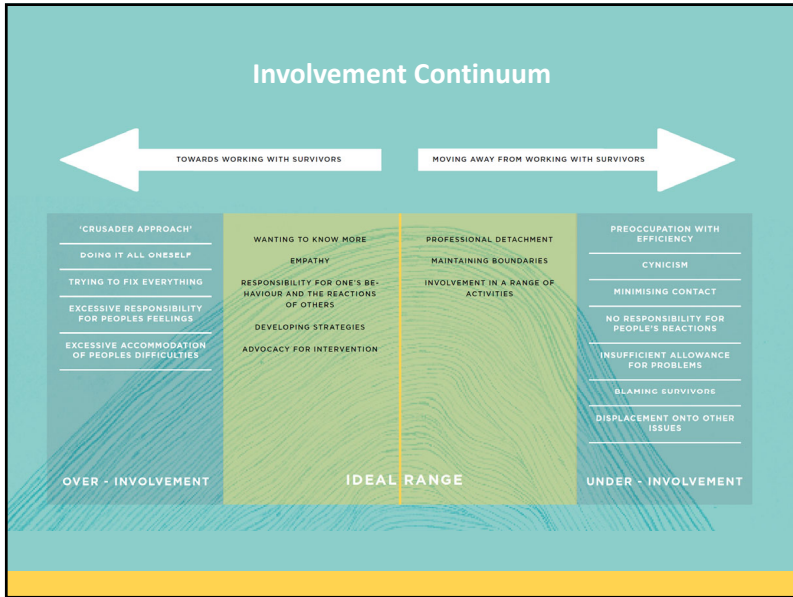
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## Acute stress and trauma responses




- Crying a lot
- Intense/persistent emotional distress
- Persistent lack of expression of positive emotions
- Aggressive behaviour or persistent anger
- Fears of going out or other fears
- Severe social withdrawal or appears uncommunicative
- Overreacting to noises in environment
- Risk taking behaviour
- Expresses threat to harm self or others
- Sleep problems
- Nightmares
- Lots of worries
- Out of control behaviour
- Not wanting to go to school or infrequent attendance
- Persistent headaches or other aches

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**Foundation House**  
The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc.


## Vicarious Trauma

The transformation of the helper's inner experience as a result of empathetic engagement with a survivor and their trauma.."

"Simply put, when we open our hearts to hear someone's story of devastation or betrayal, our beliefs are challenged, and we are changed."

Gilmore, J (2011) Vicarious Trauma: A Reflective Practice Approach

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