

# AMSSA®

 Strengthening Diversity In BC



## **Breakout Workshop A:**

**Mental Health & Vicarious Trauma –  
supporting clients with mental health  
challenges and managing vicarious  
trauma for settlement support staff**

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# Welcome

Sabrina Ziegler  
*AMSSA*

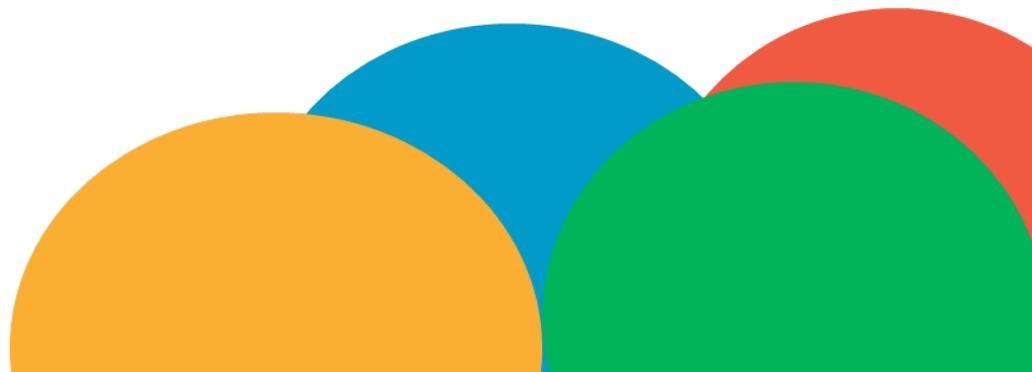
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# Housekeeping

- Cell phones – turn off ringer / turn on vibrate, take calls outside.
- All meeting documents will be sent out electronically after the meeting
- We are recording the presentations in this room today and in Westminster #1. The camera is pointed at the speakers only and may only capture your voice if you ask a question.

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# Supporting Refugee Clients & Managing Vicarious Trauma for Support Staff

Adrienne Carter

*Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for  
Immigrants & Refugees Association (CCIR)*

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VANCOUVER  
ISLAND  
Counselling Centre for  
Immigrants and Refugees

Providing Guidance on the Journey from Trauma



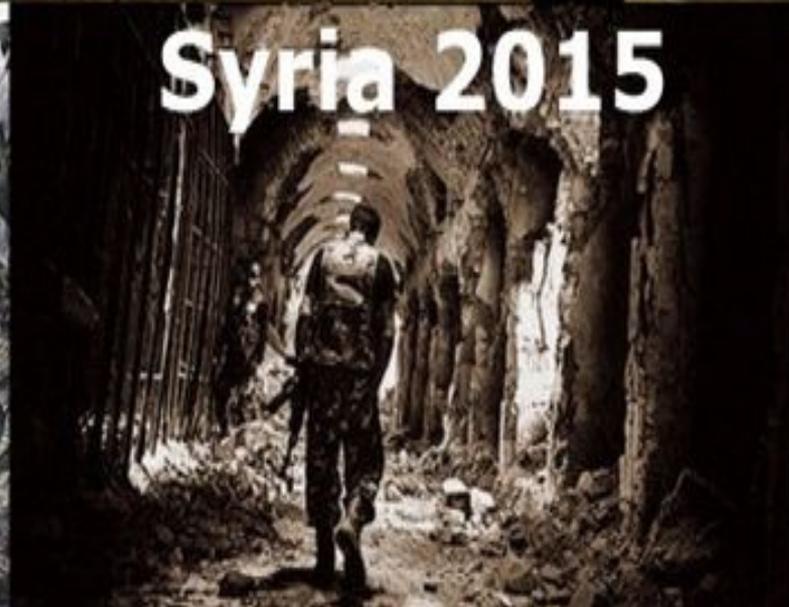
- ▶ Adrienne Carter, M.S.W. R.C.S.W.
- ▶ Registered Clinical Therapist
- ▶ Director, CCIR

# Then and Now

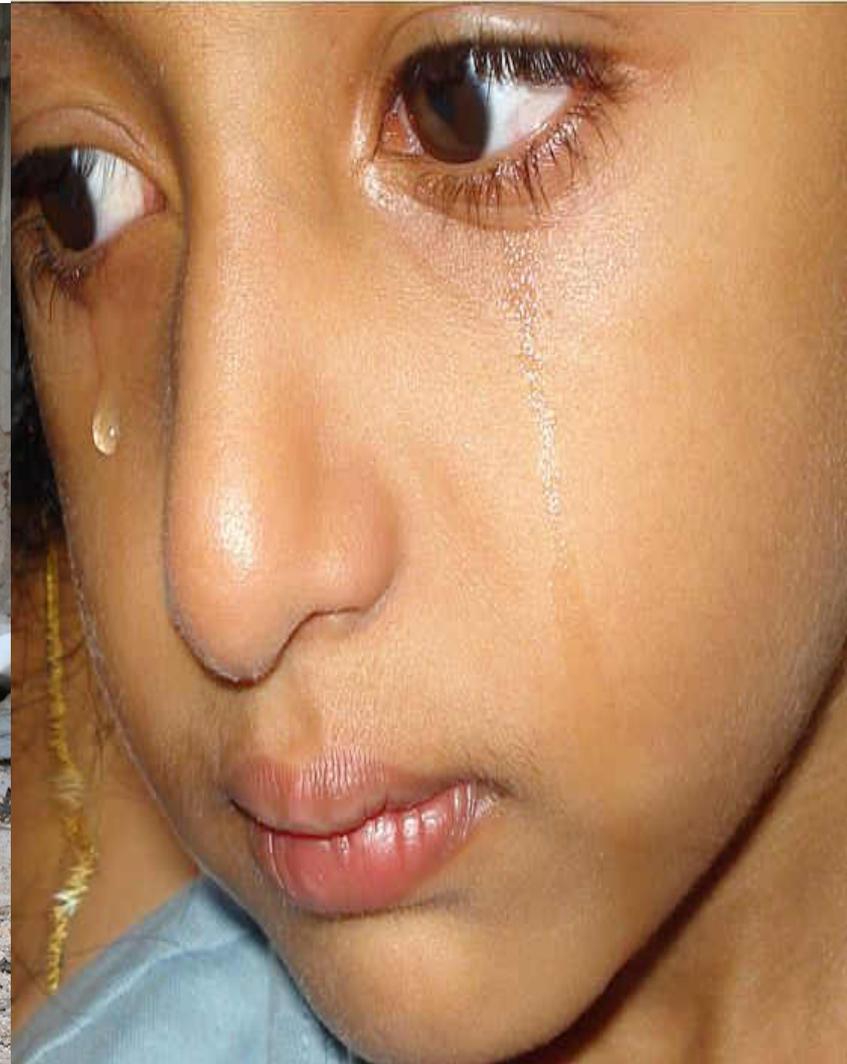
## From the old world to the new world



# The destruction of



# Waiting for the rockets to hit Aleppo



Many of our families lived under these conditions in Syria



# Shell shocked little 5 year old pulled from the rubble



Syrian refugees walking  
through the night to reach  
Jordan.



# Syrian refugees arriving to Zaatari Camp, Jordan. 2012



VANCOUVER  
ISLAND  
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Providing Guidance on the Journey from Trauma

**CCIR**

# CCIR Counsellors and Translators from Victoria and the Cowichan Valley



# CCIR Counsellors

- ▶ CCIR counsellors are trained as psychologists, counsellors, social workers, adult educators and child psychotherapists. Most are proficient in more than one model of therapy and all have been trained in trauma counselling.
- ▶ Most of our counsellors are retired or employed elsewhere, either in their own practices, hospitals or other counselling centres. Each one provides several hours of counselling weekly in our CCIR offices in Victoria or Duncan. Each counsellor has supervision, access to a consulting psychiatrist and regular trainings.
- ▶ Their investment is purely voluntary.

# Counselling and Community Support

- ▶ Counselling:
  - ▶ Individual
  - ▶ Family
  - ▶ Youth counselling
  - ▶ Child counselling
  - ▶ Support Groups
  - ▶ Therapy Groups
- ▶ Community Support: to sponsorship groups, to settlement workers, to other clinicians

# Our Lead Team and the Spanish speaking group



# CCIR Translators

- ▶ CCIR relies heavily on its translators. The translators are recruited, trained as clinical translators and provided with regular supervision and support.
- ▶ Like our counsellors, the CCIR translators currently work as volunteers. They are dedicated to helping those who share their language and frequently their culture. They have been trained to work with counsellors, and following each session, they have the opportunity for debriefing and consultation.

# Some of our translators speaking Arabic, Mandarin and Spanish



# Those who work with children and those working with adults and families



# Family, Couple and Individual Counselling

- ▶ The impact of war, loss, migration and settlement can result in symptoms that are uncomfortable, painful and sometimes intolerable. The symptoms may surface long after the traumatic event and often are on-going.
- ▶ Broad range of symptoms: impossible to concentrate, chronic pain or body tension, uncontrolled emotions, re-experiencing the memories (flashbacks), sleep disturbances. These symptoms can put intense stress on family and social relationships.
- ▶ Together, the client and counsellor determine what type of therapy is most appropriate for the presenting problems. Individual counselling is chosen when the focus is primarily on the symptoms of the client. Couple and family counselling is chosen when the need is to address the consequences of those symptoms in the relationships.
- ▶ The CCIR approach is collaborative. Counsellors work closely with professionals from other disciplines who work with our clients. All counsellors have regular supervision and access to physician and psychiatric consultation.

# Counselling for Youth and Children

- ▶ **Youth Counselling**
- ▶ The impact of war, migration and resettlement can have a huge impact on youth. CCIR offers either individual or group therapy for youth who come together to support each other in enriched, nurturing and healing ways. The groups are led by two counsellors.
- ▶ **Children's Counselling and Therapy**
- ▶ Counselling is helpful to children who have witnessed war, or felt its impact on those they love. They may suffer the symptoms of night terrors, anxiety, learning difficulties, poor concentration, irritability, depression, pervasive sadness and hopelessness, self-injuring, or aggressive and bullying behaviours. They need a safe place to tell their stories.
- ▶ Our specialized counsellors work with children of all ages using a variety of therapeutic styles and techniques. The primary way of working with young children is most likely to be either through play therapy, art therapy or with a combination of both.

# Support Groups

- ▶ Provides relaxed, comfortable atmosphere to reduce social isolation and discussion of relevant topics around resettlement.
- ▶ Friendships often begin in the groups and continue afterwards.
- ▶ Sharing common experiences.
- ▶ Support groups are offered for men, women, teens and children

# Therapy Groups

- ▶ CCIR therapy groups are modelled after those that were conducted in Jordan by Center for Victims of Torture
- ▶ Each group is guided by two counsellors through the various stages of healing. These stages follow the Judith Herman model.
- ▶ Safety and Stabilization: Orientation, creating a safe space and establishing trust.
- ▶ Grief and Mourning: Processing the trauma.
- ▶ Reconnection: Getting back to community, restoring life purpose, developing and repairing relationships with friends and family.

# Our home in St. Peter's Church



# Contact

- ▶ Please feel free to contact us, we are here to help. We maintain offices in Victoria and in Duncan.

- ▶ 3939 St. Peter's Rd. Victoria, B.C.

- ▶ 250-999-8170

Website: [www.ccfir.ca](http://www.ccfir.ca)

## Join Our Team

- ▶ We welcome your contribution to our family of volunteers, and to our team of counsellors and translators

## Donate

- ▶ Your contribution will help us enrich Vancouver Island's integrated communities and strengthen those who live in them.



**Vicarious  
Traumatizati  
on**

**Vicarious Traumatization** refers to the transformation in the trauma worker's inner experience resulting from empathic engagement with clients' trauma material.

Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995

© Crisci & Mayer

# **Vicarious Traumatization**

**It is not the responsibility  
of our clients, nor in any  
way an indictment of  
them. It is an  
occupational hazard that  
must be acknowledged and  
addressed.**

# IMPACT OF SECONDARY TRAUMA

## **Causes Disruptions to one's sense of:**

- ◆ Meaning
- ◆ Connection
- ◆ Identity
- ◆ World View
- ◆ Tolerance
- ◆ Psychological needs
- ◆ Beliefs about self and others
- ◆ Interpersonal relationships
- ◆ Sensory memory
- ◆ Spirituality

# **CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO SECONDARY TRAUMA**

## **THERAPIST/LISTENER**

**Personal History**

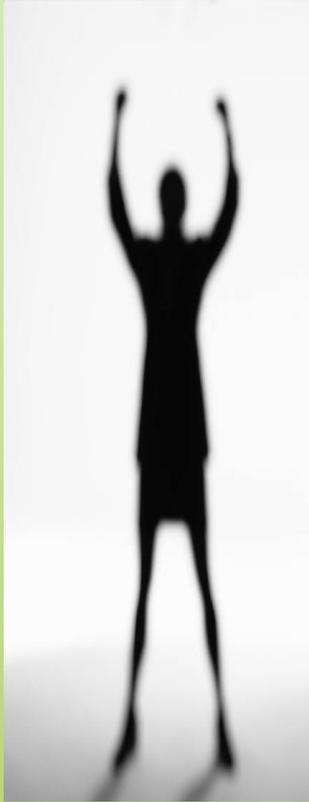
**Personality and defensive styles**

**Current life context**

**Training and professional history**

**Personal Therapy**

**Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1998**



Two Tiered  
Model of  
Supervision  
Supports Great  
Staff and Good  
Trauma Work

# Supervision and Support

- Is the cornerstone to sound clinical practice. It provides oversight and accountability
- Having others examine the work we do with clients gives us the opportunity to become knowledgeable about issues outside our awareness
- Getting feedback and another point of view can improve effectiveness

# It's a Professional Thing to Do

- ▶ All mental health workers will be affected by the work they do
- ▶ It is professional behaviour to acknowledge these feelings and examine them to ensure no harm comes to clients
- ▶ Not to do so can result in unprofessional behaviour and potential professional misconduct and error

# Q&A Session

Sabrina Ziegler  
*AMSSA*

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# Group Therapy Program for Refugee Clients

Mariana Martinez Vieyra

*Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST)*

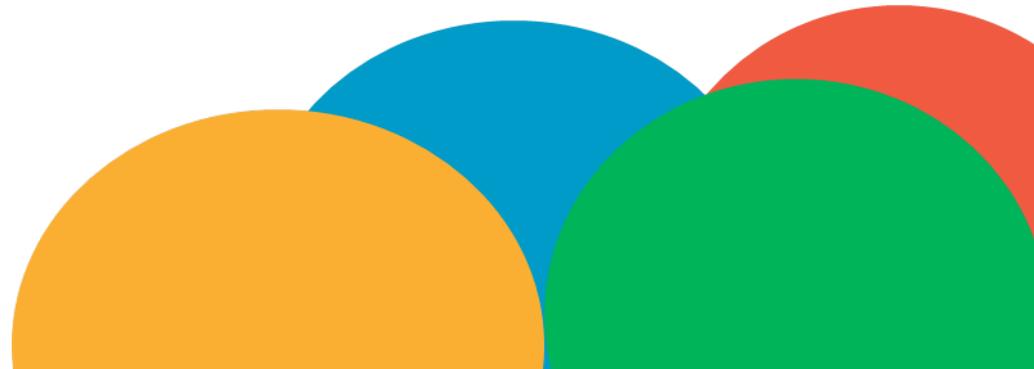
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# Re-Building Community in Canada VAST Group Therapy Program for Refugees



Presented by **Mariana Martinez Vieyra** M.Ed RCC  
Provincial Refugee Mental Health Coordinator  
Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST)

## Session Outline

- The Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST)
- Community-based , Trauma- informed Practice
- VAST Phase-Model Approach to Refugee Trauma Healing
- Herman' s Stages of Trauma Recovery Applied to Refugees
- Re-Building Community in Canada: A Model for Group-based Mental Health for Refugees
-

## Session Outline Continued

- Assessing Group-Readiness- VAST Vulnerability Screening Tool
- Landing and Settling : A Trauma-Informed Group Program for Refugees in BC
- Lessons Learnt
- Clients Say

# The Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST)



## VAST Mandate

VAST was founded in 1986 to promote the human rights and mental health of refugees who arrive in British Columbia with psychological trauma as a result of torture, political violence, or other forms of persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, and political opinion.



## Community-based , Trauma-informed Practice

- Healing happens in community
- Collaboration, choice, trustworthiness, empowerment.
- Integration of services key
- Trauma-informed settlement /settlement –informed trauma healing work
- Timely referral and follow up
- Increased sustainability

# Judith Herman's (1992) Three-Phase Model of Trauma Treatment

- Stage I: Safety and Stabilization.
- Stage II: Remembrance and Mourning
- Stage III: Reconnection

# Stages of Trauma Recovery Applied to Refugees

## Safety and Stabilization

- Create a safe and stable life in the here-and-now
- "Be here" instead of "going there"
- Remember vs. re-live the trauma
- Focus on resettlement goals

## Remembrance and Mourning      Trauma-focused

- Trauma-memory processing – Grief

## Reconnection

- Personality integration -new facets of identity – meaning making
- Community-building

# Re-Building Community in Canada

## A Model for Group-based Mental Health for Refugees

### Why Trauma-informed Groups?

- Build capacity
- Effective use of resources
- Potentially more cross-culturally sensitive
- Integrate settlement and mental health services
- Strengths-based, non-pathologizing
- Reduce stigma

# Trauma-informed Groups for Refugees

- Provide Safety and Containment
- Explore Resources
- Build Coping Skills
- Introduce Psycho Education
- Establish Trusting Relationships
- Opportunity for ongoing assessment
- Prompt referral and Advocacy

# Assessing Group-Readiness VAST Vulnerability Screening Tool

## PART 1: Settlement Checklist

Ten question checklist to confirm whether or not your client is connected to a broad range of community programs and services

## Part 2: Mental Health Screening Tool

PROTECT Questionnaire, ten questions derived from DSM5 PTSD diagnostic criteria

## Part 3: Resiliency Inventory

Open- ended questions to explore sources of resiliency and strength

# Landing and Settling

## A Trauma-Informed Group Program for Refugees in BC

- Closed group
- 6 sessions
- Brief strengths-based ,early Interventions
- Focus on group-based problem solving
- Psychosocial + Settlement Support

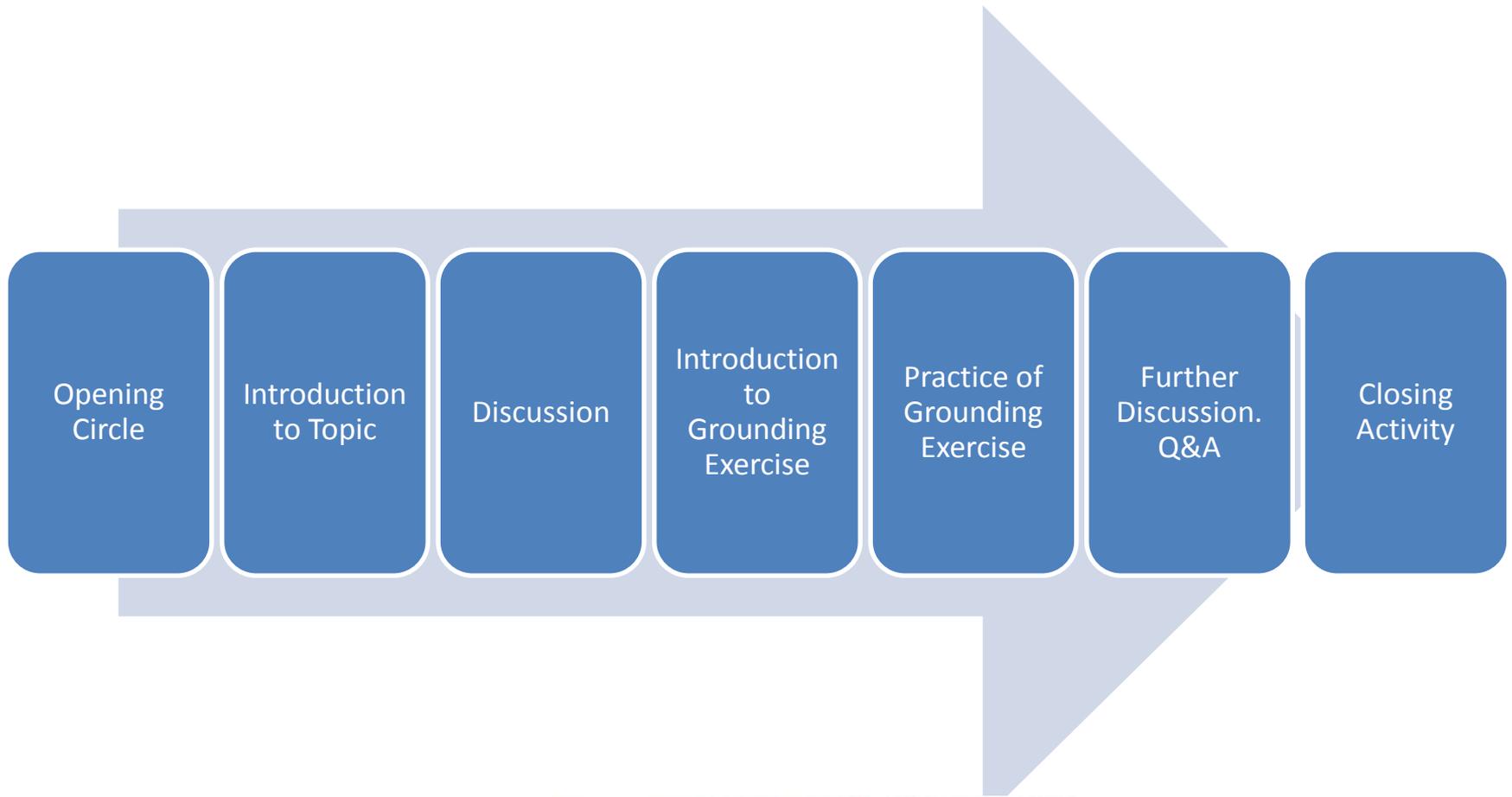
# Landing and Settling

## A Trauma-Informed Group Program for Refugees in BC

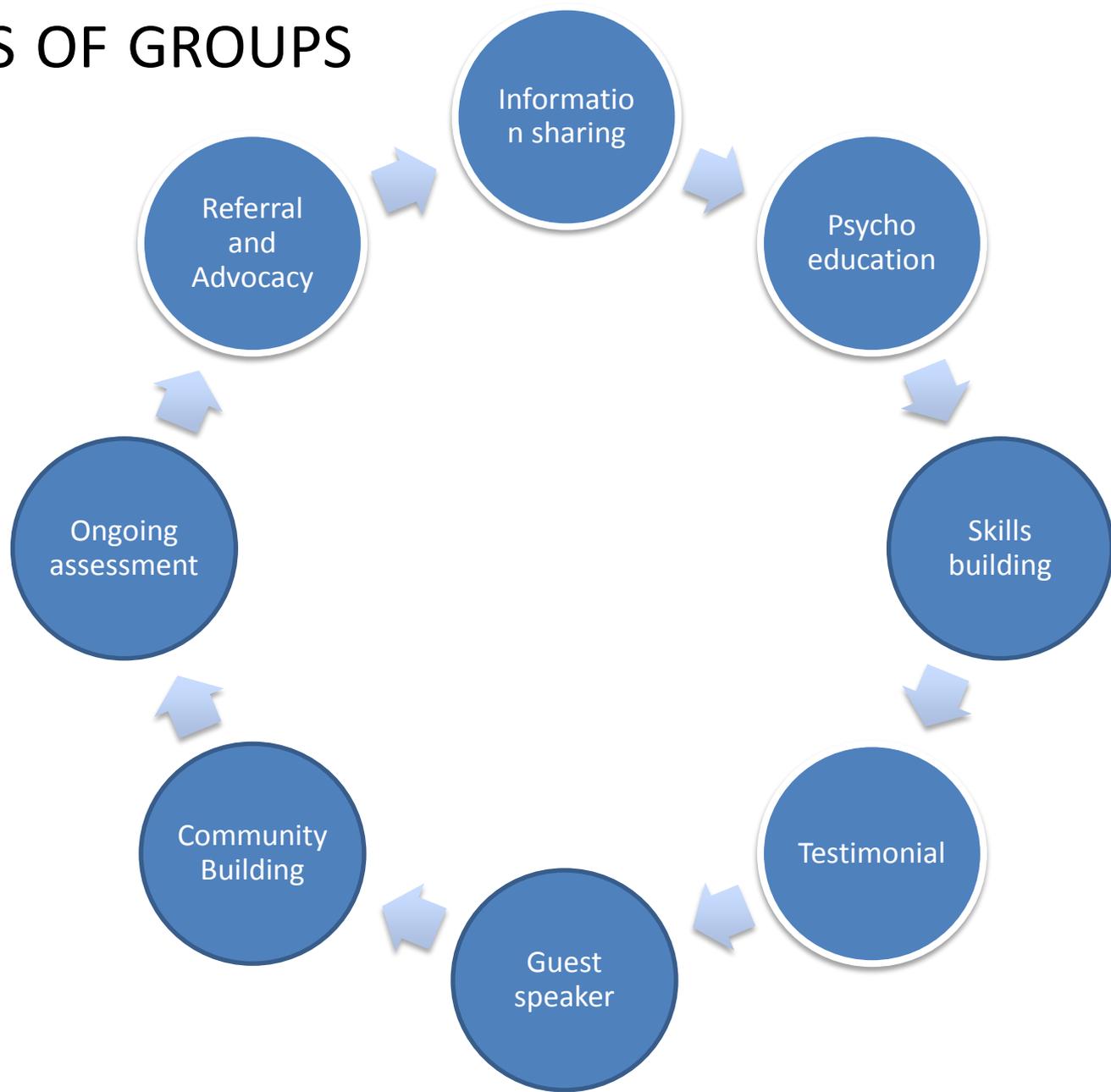
- Facilitated by clinical counsellor + settlement worker
- In first language or multilingual (language corners)
- Manual available
- Session Handouts in Arabic

# Landing and Settling

A Trauma-Informed Group Program for Refugees in BC



# ELEMENTS OF GROUPS



## Lessons Learnt

- Healing happens in Community
- Witnessing fosters empowerment
- Groups can be challenging but they are worth trying
- Assessment for group readiness key
- Integration of services contributes to stigma reduction
- Content needs to be negotiated

## Clients say:

- I couldn't speak. Now I'm coming back to share my strength with others
- "I feel more connected each time."
- "Hearing from people who've been through it, people in my shoes, gave me courage and hope"
- "We are so different, but also we are similar, we are together"

Looking forward to your questions

Thanks



# Q&A Session

Sabrina Ziegler  
*AMSSA*

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# Key Insights and Wrap-Up

- What will you take back to your organization today from today's presentations?
- Do you think some of what was presented today can be applied to programming at your organizations?
- What was a key learning from today's session?

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