

Broken Links

Psychosocial support for people separated from family members



Training module

Psychosocial Centre



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Broken Links: Psychosocial support for people separated from family members (Training module)

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Please contact the PS Centre if you wish to translate or adapt any part of *Broken Links: Psychosocial support for people separated from family members (Training module)*. We welcome your comments, feedback and questions at psychosocial.centre@ifrc.org.

Please see the full list of materials available from the PS Centre at www.pscentre.org.
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Foreword

Circumstances surrounding conflict, crisis or disaster can cause families to become separated from their loved ones. Experience has shown that beneficiaries who approach the Red Cross Red Crescent looking for family members are often in need of psychosocial support; likewise, those seeking psychosocial support may also have tracing needs.

For such situations, Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers are trained in implementing Restoring Family Links (RFL). RFL refers to a broad range of activities aimed at preventing separation and disappearance, restoring and maintaining contact between family members, reuniting families, and clarifying what happened to persons reported missing.

Broken Links: Psychosocial support for people separated from family members (Training module) and the corresponding *Broken Links* field guide are designed to support staff and volunteers in a wide range of settings where they may be in contact with families who have been separated from their loved ones. The field guide and the training module outline the causes and consequences of being separated from family members, as well as the types of contact staff and volunteers might have with families affected by separation.

The International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support (the PS Centre) focusses on capacity building in National Societies and on spreading knowledge about psychosocial support. The PS Centre's primary aim is to integrate psychosocial support into humanitarian interventions and to ensure the psychosocial well-being of staff and volunteers.

Psychosocial support, specifically for people separated from family members, was identified as a gap area following the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. For this reason, the International Federation Indian Ocean Tsunami Operation has supported the PS Centre in capacity building and knowledge dissemination within the Movement.

Broken Links field guide and training module were developed as a result of that collaboration. Both books offer resources for providing psychosocial support to families and individuals affected by separation, and can be downloaded from www.pscentre.org.

We hope that staff and volunteers supporting families who have been separated from their loved ones will find these resources useful.

Nana Wiedemann

Nana Wiedemann

Head of IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support

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A

Introduction to training resources

Ibrahim Malla/IFRC



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support (PS Centre)

The PS Centre works in partnership with other services of the Red Cross Red Crescent in order to serve the psychosocial needs of individuals and communities. In addition to a large database of psychosocial support publications (available on www.pscentre.org), the PS Centre also has a wide range of other materials, including resources on setting up psychosocial programmes. For new ideas and the latest in psychosocial support, you are welcome to subscribe to our electronic newsletter, PS News, our tri-annual magazine, *Coping with Crisis*, and our Facebook page.

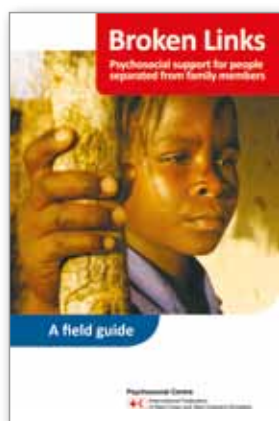


This training module has three parts:

- Part A: Introduction to training resources
- Part B: Trainer's notes
- Part C: Annex

Broken Links: Psychosocial support for people separated from family members (Training module)

The PS Centre has produced a field guide and a one-day training module on psychosocial support for people separated from family members. These resources were developed to support staff and volunteers in a wide range of settings who may be in contact with families who have been separated from their loved ones. The field guide and the training module can be downloaded from www.pscentre.org.



When a family member or loved one has gone missing, the resulting uncertainty is one of the most difficult conditions to cope with: not being able to contact the person who has disappeared, not knowing their whereabouts, how they are faring, or if they are even alive. Whether resulting from armed conflict, disaster, migration or other types of crisis, sudden separation from family members can lead to feelings of despair, fear and guilt in those who have gone missing as well as in those who have been left behind. These feelings often intensify with time, as worry deepens and hopelessness may set in. For those who have been separated from family members, there is no foreseeable outcome and often little comfort or possibility for closure.

The field guide and the training module outline the types of contact staff and volunteers might have with families affected by separation, offering resources for providing psychosocial support. The materials focus on the causes and consequences of being separated from family members, the psychosocial impacts of separation, how staff and volunteers can support people in this situation, as well as self-care for staff and volunteers. There is also information about the Family Links Network.

The field guide is designed as a practical resource for staff and volunteers working in the field and can be used to accompany this training module.

The aim of the training module is to build skills and confidence in Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers in order to improve their responses, as well as to raise awareness of the broader goals of the Movement's work in supporting families separated from their loved ones.

Information for trainers

This training module is designed as a one-day workshop with five sessions that correspond to the materials in the field guide. It provides a basic introduction to psychosocial support for people who have been separated from family members. It is not a requirement that participants have a background in health, mental health or social welfare. The ideal number of participants per training is 20-25 people.

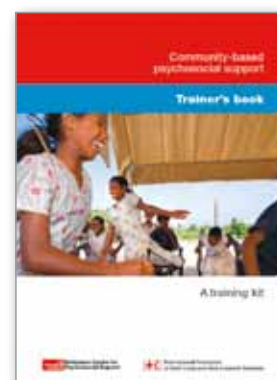
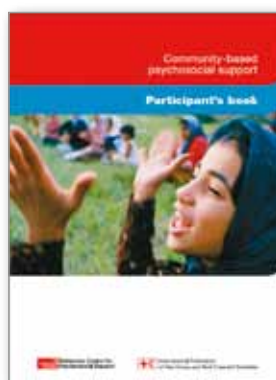
It is preferable that trainers, on the other hand, have a background in health, mental health, social welfare, education, conflict studies or migration, and have a good understanding of psychosocial support and of the possible impact that being separated can have on individuals and families. Trainers should be familiar with facilitating psychosocial trainings, have good communication skills and a working knowledge of the Movement.

The training module can be delivered as a one-day workshop or included as part of a longer training programme, for example, in disaster preparedness, first aid or social welfare. The box below shows the programme for the training module as outlined in this booklet. The material provided will need to be adapted appropriately to the local context.

Time	Content
09.00-09.30	Welcome and introduction
09.30-10.00	Session 1: Causes of separation
10.00-10.20	Break
10.20-11.00	Session 2: Consequences of separation
11.00-12.00	Session 3: Psychosocial impact of being separated
12.00-13.00	Lunch break
13.00-14.30	Session 4: How to support
14.30-15.00	Break
15.00-16.00	Session 5: Self-care
16.00-16.30	Winding up the day

It is important that the trainer is well-prepared and feels comfortable with the topics covered in the training. For more information about how to be a good trainer please see *Community-based Psychosocial Support: A training kit*.

If a National Society is not able to identify a local trainer, the PS Centre can provide assistance in finding a trainer and give advice on training programmes.



Using the training materials

People differ in how they assimilate information. This training module therefore features varying training methods and ways of reviewing the materials that help maintain participants' interest and integrate learning. Short presentations, group work and individual activities all help in meeting different learning styles. Activities give participants opportunities to link the training to their own experiences and to broaden their view of their work through interaction with other group members.

It is recommended that trainers familiarise themselves with the field guide as well as the trainer's notes in this booklet in preparation for facilitating the module. The trainer's notes include introductory and closing activities, plus five sessions focusing on psychosocial support for people affected by separation. A set of PowerPoint slides is available to accompany the training. The notes for each session provide:

- an introduction, so that the trainer can set the scene, introducing the topic and motivating participants for the learning process
- instructions for activities, including the purpose for each activity, materials required and the procedure
- notes for the short presentations
- questions to stimulate discussion and reflection (they are not meant to be used to test learning).

Page references to the field guide are given in the trainer's notes, so that trainers can tell participants where to find additional information.

All the activities in this manual can be adjusted and can vary in length, depending on the number of participants and time allocated per session. The trainer should keep an eye on the allocated time, and make sure that activities fit into the day's schedule.

Instructions to trainers are given in italics.



Checklist of training materials

- a copy of the trainer's notes
- a copy of the field guide for the trainer, plus copies for participants if required
- copies of the day's training programme for participants OR make a PowerPoint slide to present this information to participants
- PowerPoint slides, plus projector and screen
- hand-outs (see annex 1)
- name tags for trainer/s and participants
- materials for the training activities including flipchart paper, markers, paper, pens, tape, etc.



Trainer's notes

Welcome, introduction to the training programme and ground rules

30 minutes

Jarkko Mikkonen/ Finnish Red Cross

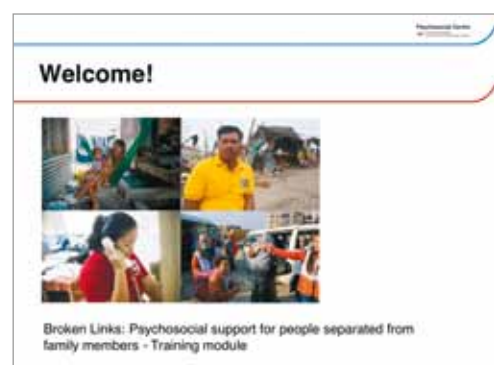


The way a workshop starts is essential to its success. It is important to begin on a positive note. The participants need time to get to know each other and the trainer and to settle into the space being used for training. Although this is only a one-day training, take time to create a positive and safe environment, and don't be tempted to rush the introduction. Participants will only have trust and confidence to share experiences during the day if a safe working environment is established from the beginning.

The introduction begins with a welcome and an icebreaker, followed by information

about the training programme and an exercise to establish ground rules for the day.

1. Welcome



Start by welcoming the participants to the workshop and briefly list the opening activities:

- an icebreaker to get to know one another
- the day's training programme
- ground rules for the whole workshop.



When welcoming participants to the training, you can choose to introduce the topic of the training by referring to the photos in the first PowerPoint slide. Explain that the training addresses the need for psychosocial support for people separated from family members – like the man who lost 21 family members during typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, or the woman whose grandmother and aunt were among the 1.700 missing after the typhoon. Explain that you will talk about how to support people who have been separated from their loved ones, and that one way of supporting them is by answering calls from people who are trying to reach their missing family members. Another way to support people is to assist in the reunification process.

2. Icebreaker: Ball toss

PURPOSE

To provide an opportunity for participants to get to know one another. (If the participants already know one another, do the icebreaker to share expectations of the training – see procedure below).

MATERIALS REQUIRED

A small ball

PROCEDURE

1. Invite participants to stand in a circle with you and explain that the idea of the game is for the group to get to know one another by throwing a ball to one another. Explain that whenever someone catches the ball, they have to say three things about themselves: 1) their name, 2) something special about themselves as a person, and 3) one expectation for the training.

2. Now throw the ball to someone in the circle. If the first person you throw the ball to does not know how to respond, remind them of what they need to say.

3. Encourage the first participant to throw the ball to someone else in the group and so on, until everyone has had a chance to speak.

4. Include yourself as the trainer in this activity so that participants get to know you, too.

Please note: This activity can be used throughout the workshop to reinforce learning, for example, when you do the section in session 5 on signs of stress, you can ask participants to shout out examples of signs of stress as they catch the ball.

3. The training programme

Programme	
09.00 - 09.30	Welcome and introduction
09.30 - 10.00	Session 1: Causes of separation
10.00 - 10.20	BREAK
10.20 - 11.00	Session 2: Consequences of separation
11.00 - 12.00	Session 3: Psychosocial impact of being separated
12.00 - 13.00	LUNCH BREAK
13.00 - 14.30	Session 4: How to support
14.30 - 15.00	BREAK
15.00 - 16.00	Session 5: Self-Care
16.00 - 16.30	Winding up the day

1. Give an overview of the training programme, using the PowerPoint slide or the printed copy in the training materials you have prepared.

Learning objectives	
The training will enable you to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand psychological and social reactions to separation • recognize and support people who have been separated from family members with sensitivity and in line with local customs • take care of yourself in your work. 	

2. Present the learning objectives of the training to the participants.

The training enables participants to:

- understand psychological and social reactions to separation
- recognise and support people who have been separated, with sensitivity and in line with local circumstances
- take care of themselves in their work.

4. Ground rules



PURPOSE

To create a safe environment that fosters the development of trusting working relationships among participants, increasing their confidence to share experiences during the training

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Flip chart paper, pens, writing paper

PROCEDURE

1. Ask participants to work together in pairs. Ask them to write a list of ground rules on a piece of paper. Give them five minutes to do this. Let them know that they will be sharing them with group afterwards.
2. Share in plenary what each pair has come up with.
3. As each pair reads out their suggestions, write them up on a flipchart. Make sure to include the following points:

- Participants are encouraged to share their experiences and skills and that this is a valuable contribution to the training.
- Participants are encouraged to ask questions whenever they are confused or do not understand something.
- Constructive feedback is helpful to everyone in the group.
- Confidentiality should be respected. In a workshop like this, building trust is essential. Some participants may share personal information or talk about the people they have helped. It is important to agree that everything that is shared within the group will remain confidential. Everybody who agrees to this unbreakable rule should raise their hand. If someone cannot agree, they should not take part in the training (you should of course ask why they cannot agree).
- Make an agreement on the use of mobile phones. For example, agree whether they should be turned off or put on silent mode, or in what circumstances, if any, it might be acceptable to answer one's mobile.
- Make an agreement on timekeeping and punctuality. Let participants know that the workshop will start and end on time as long as they return promptly from breaks and lunch.
- Make an agreement with the group about participants needing to leave the room (for example, to use the bathroom or to answer an urgent phone call). Work out how this can be done with minimal disruption to everyone. If a participant is in the middle of a personal story, it can be very frustrating to be interrupted by a ringing phone and might result in the person withdrawing. It may also be seen as disrespectful to leave the room when someone is sharing their experiences with the group.

Causes of separation from family members

SESSION

1

30 minutes



Patrick Fuller/FRC

Introduction

This session looks at the many different causes behind families and individuals becoming separated. After a short presentation, participants are asked to identify psychosocial support needs in an example of an emergency in Turkey.

1.1: What are some possible causes for families becoming separated? (group work and short presentation)

Session 1: Causes of separation from family members



Possible causes for family members becoming separated (group work)

Spent ten minutes with the person next to you identifying the following:

- Situations that can cause families and individuals to become separated



 **PURPOSE**

To open up a discussion about the reasons for separation

**MATERIALS REQUIRED**

Paper and pens

**PROCEDURE**

1. Explain that a wide range of situations can cause families and individuals to become separated from one another.
2. Ask participants to spend ten minutes with the person next to them identifying and listing different possible situations.
3. Ask a few of the pairs for some examples from their discussion. Show the PowerPoint slide with potential causes, asking the group if they listed the following:



- **Migration** for social, economic or environmental reasons (both international and internal) can create circumstances where people lose contact.
- **Disasters** – natural or man-made – can be utterly devastating, causing disruption to infrastructure and means of communication.
- **Pandemics and epidemics** can cut people off from one another, causing isolation and dislocation.
- **Armed conflict** and other situations of violence, like terror attacks or mass shootings, can result in casualties, often unbeknownst to the family of the wounded or deceased. Imprisonment and detention may mean that those detained have no chance of informing their relatives of where they are or how they are doing.

- **The death of a parent or close relative** can cause the rest of the family to disperse and lose contact with one another.
 - **Seeking refuge** because of persecution, death threats related to discrimination, for example or because of forced marriage can lead to loss of contact between family members.
 - **Human trafficking** is believed to be one of the fastest-growing criminal activities in the world and a growing reason for brutal family separations. Refugee families are particularly vulnerable.
4. Ask if the participants have anything to add to the list.

1.2: Survivors found after Turkish earthquake (group work)

**PURPOSE**

To identify the range of needs and the responses required when people are separated in a crisis event.

**MATERIALS REQUIRED**

Hand-out 1: 'Survivors found after Turkish earthquake' (from Annex 1) – one copy per participant, pens in different colours and paper. If preferred, the case can be replaced with a case relevant to the local context.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Distribute the hand-outs, pens and paper. Explain that the hand-out is an article about an earthquake in Turkey. The activity will consist of reading the article individually and afterward, identifying in groups the people affected by the disaster,

their needs, the psychosocial consequences and the psychosocial activities that could be provided for the people affected.

2. Participants should try to identify in the article the following themes arising from this disaster. (Use the PowerPoint slide or write on a flipchart the list of themes shown below):

- persons affected by the disaster
- basic needs (health, food, shelter, etc.)
- psychosocial consequences of the disaster
- psychosocial support activities for affected persons
- psychosocial support activities for aid and rescue workers.

3. Explain that participants should sketch the different themes on paper. One way of illustrating the persons affected by the disaster could be by drawing matchstick men with arrows pointing to symbols illustrating their basic needs in one colour and the psychological consequences of the disaster drawn in another colour.

4. Tell the participants that this is an exercise in identifying different aspects of a disaster, and that there are no wrong answers.

5. Ask each group to present different aspects of their drawing. For example, one group might present basic needs, another group presents psychological consequences, a third group presents psychosocial support activities for the affected persons and the last group presents psychosocial support activities for aid and rescue workers. After each group's presentation, ask the other groups if they have anything to add.

6. End the activity by summarizing that an emergency situation often generates overlapping and multi-layered needs for those affected.



Questions	Examples of answers
Persons affected by the disaster	Five survivors, relatives to the deceased, bystanders, the aid and rescue workers
Basic needs	Medical care, food, shelter
Psychosocial consequences of the disaster	Loss, grief, stress, anxiety, fear, family separation
Psychosocial support activities for affected persons	Connecting with loved ones and family, PFA, safe spaces for children, support groups, mourning rituals
Psychosocial support activities for aid and rescue workers	Peer support groups; briefings; creating a work culture that fosters reasonable working hours and conditions, as well as encourages regular staff meetings

Consequences of separation from family members

SESSION

2

40 minutes

IFRC



Introduction



This session looks at possible consequences of separation from family members. It includes group work about the impact of separation on different groups, short presentations on secondary separation and a summary of the session.

2.1: Consequences of separation for different groups (group work)

Registration Code: 0000000000000000

Consequences of separation for different groups (group work)

Spend fifteen minutes with your group discussing the following:

- What might be some of the reasons behind the separation from family members for your group (i.e. children, women or men)?
- What is particular about the consequences of separation for this group?

Write down your answers on the post-it notes, one reason per post-it.

PURPOSE

To consider the consequences separation from family members may have for different groups in a population

 **MATERIALS REQUIRED**

Post-it notes in three different colours, flipchart paper, tape and markers

 **PROCEDURE**

1. Open the activity by explaining that when people are separated from one another, they suffer from a great deal of uncertainty and fear. Both the person who has disappeared and the persons left behind will be impacted.
2. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to encourage participants to think about the consequences of separation on the various groups involved.
3. Divide the participants into three groups. One group will look at children, one at men and the third at women. Hand out Post-it notes (one colour per group).
4. Ask the groups to spend fifteen minutes discussing two questions:
 - What might be some of the reasons behind the separation from family members for their group (i.e. children, women or men)?
 - What is particular regarding the consequences of separation for this group?
5. Ask participants to write down their answers on the post-it notes, one reason per post-it.
6. While the groups work, take three flipchart papers and write one heading per page: Children, Men, and Women. Hang the flipchart pages on the walls around the room.
7. Ask the groups to place their Post-it notes on the flipchart paper for the group they have focused on.
8. Now invite everyone to walk around the room for ten minutes and read the other groups' flip chart papers. Have some extra

Post-it notes available so that they can add new suggestions if they find something are missing.

9. Follow up by highlighting the following points:



- **For children, sudden separation from parents can cause** loss of sense of self, loss of sense of security, loss of protection, complicated reactions and feelings, and insecurity due to not knowing if one's parents are alive or dead.
- **Unaccompanied minors** without adult or parental protection are dependent on external assistance with regard to their human rights; they are at risk of sexual violence, abuse, exploitation or recruitment into armed forces.
- **Parents who have been separated from a child** are often left with feelings of despair, helplessness and guilt, for not having been able to protect and take care for their child.

Consequences of separation for men

Men report a range of reactions and feelings such as:

- Frustration
- Powerlessness
- Anger
- Desperation
- Denial, loneliness
- Sadness
- Isolation
- Shock



Men are often left alone with the responsibility for housekeeping and child-rearing, which may contribute to these feelings.

- **Men** report a range of reactions and feelings, including frustration, powerlessness, anger, desperation, denial, loneliness, sadness, isolation and shock. Men are often left alone with the responsibility for housekeeping and child-rearing, which may contribute to these feelings.

Consequences of separation for women

Women left alone are:

- more at risk for and vulnerable to violence
- more at risk for sex trafficking
- often disconnected from their community
- stigmatized, haunted by guilt and shame
- often feeling that the situation is their own fault.



- **Women left alone** are more at risk for and vulnerable to violence, more at risk of sex trafficking, often disconnected from their community, often stigmatized, haunted by guilt and shame, often feeling the situation is their own fault.
- **Most families** will want an answer regarding the fate of the missing and they need economic support in the absence of a breadwinner.

2.2: Secondary separation (short presentation and discussion)

Secondary separation

Occasionally, medical evacuations and transfers in emergencies lead to **secondary separations**, which occur when people cannot be traced in the system of being transferred between health and/or other services in emergencies.



Have any of you experienced this problem?
How did you deal with it?

PURPOSE

To consider the consequences of separation in medical evacuations or other transfers in emergencies

MATERIALS REQUIRED

None

PROCEDURE

1. Explain (using PowerPoint slides if required):

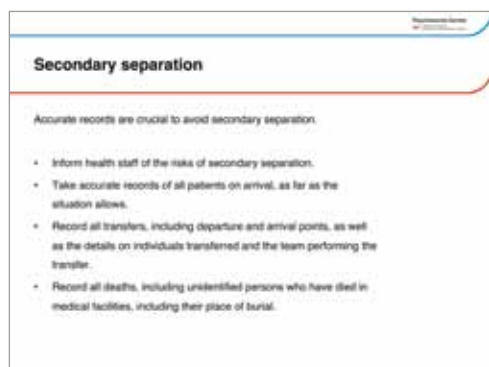
Occasionally, medical evacuations and transfers in emergencies lead to ‘secondary separations,’ which occur when people cannot be traced in the system of being transferred between health and/or other services in emergencies.

2. Ask participants if any of them have experienced this problem and how they have dealt with it.

3. Continue with the short presentation:

Children are especially at risk. In Haiti after the earthquake 2010, for example, secondary separation proved to be a significant challenge with the number of injured children being evacuated for medical treatment abroad. Many families were not able to locate their children were after they had been sent overseas for treatment.

This type of situation can cause great distress in parents and children, triggering emotions, thoughts and physical reactions connected to the original emergency.



Accurate records are crucial to avoid secondary separation.

1. Alert health staff to the risks of secondary separation for people receiving medical treatment. Having accurate records enables RFL teams to locate people who have been separated from their families.
2. Take accurate records of all patients on arrival, as far as the situation allows.
3. Record all transfers, including departure and arrival points, as well as the details on individuals transferred and the team performing the transfer.
4. Record all deaths, including unidentified persons who have died in medical facilities, including their place of burial.

All these situations hold potential for significant impact on people’s mental health and psychosocial well-being. Reuniting and linking people with their family as a response is generally one of the most important psychosocial support activities.

Summary (short presentation)

PURPOSE

To summarise the information covered in this session

MATERIALS REQUIRED

None

PROCEDURE



1. Highlight the following points (using PowerPoint slides if required):

- **Staff and volunteers** need to know about the causes and consequences of separation in any situation in which they are working. They also need to know where functioning, trusted support systems can be located and how to make referrals if needed. (This will limit the risk of abuse and exploitation of those needing help).
- **For children**, a sudden separation from their parents will cause a profound loss of sense of security and protection. Being unexpectedly separated, having no chance to say goodbye, and then not knowing whether their parent is alive or dead will intensify and complicate feelings and reactions.
- **For the parents**, not being able to protect and take care of their children and uncertainty of their well-being will lead to profound despair, feelings of helplessness and guilt.

- **Unaccompanied minors** are another group of special concern, as they are without adult or parental protection often in a foreign country. They are dependent on external assistance for protection and assertion of their human rights. These children are at risk of sexual violence, abuse, exploitation or recruitment into armed forces.
 - **Men – whether as soldiers or civilians** – are more likely to go missing than women. As the man is often a family's sole provider, his disappearance can leave dependents destitute.
 - **The needs of families** differ depending on circumstances, including education and economic situation. However, most families agree on their priorities: they want an answer regarding the fate of the missing and they need economic support in the absence of a breadwinner. Some families also mention justice as a priority.
 - **For women** left alone, there may be protection concerns too, as they may be more at risk for and vulnerable to violence.
- Women seeking jobs as domestic workers or as factory workers, and those who are victims of sex trafficking represent a significant percentage of those disconnected from their community. They risk finding themselves cut off from their families and unable to communicate with the outside world. These women may be stigmatized, haunted by guilt and shame, feeling the situation is their own fault and fearful that their families will find out what has happened to them.
2. Ask the participants if they have anything to add from their group discussion.

For more information on separation, please see pages 7-18 in the field guide.

The psychosocial impact of separation from family members

SESSION

3

60 minutes



IFRC



Introduction

This session begins with a short presentation on psychosocial support and then looks at the different impacts separation may have on people, focusing especially on ambiguous loss.

3.1: Psychosocial support (short presentation)

PURPOSE

To define and describe psychosocial support

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Flipchart paper and markers (to draw the IASC pyramid, if PowerPoint slides are not used)

PROCEDURE

1. Begin by talking about the uncertainty associated with separation from family members:

When people are separated from one another, they suffer from uncertainty and fear. Being unexpectedly separated, having no chance to say goodbye, and not

knowing whether a person is alive or dead will intensify and complicate feelings and reactions.

2. Continue the presentation by focusing on the support that is offered to people who have been separated:

It can take a long time to find someone who is missing and can therefore be demanding work to support people who have been separated. Psychosocial support is one way of assisting people who are separated from their loved ones. Psychosocial support can be provided in all sorts of different ways.



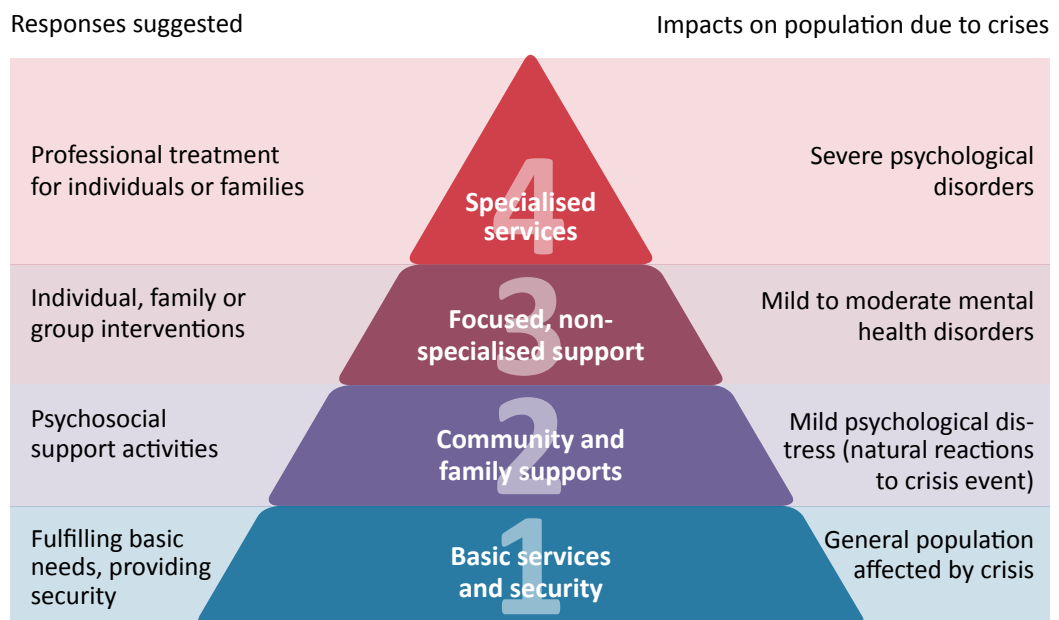
The term 'psychosocial' refers to the interconnection between the psychological and social aspects of human life. Psychological aspects refer to an individual's inner feelings, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and behaviour. The social aspect refers to an individual's values, upbringing and relationships to others in society.



3. Refer to the IASC mental health and psychosocial support pyramid:

The IASC mental health and psychosocial support pyramid

Mental health and psychosocial support services



Source: This illustration is based on the intervention pyramid for mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies in the IASC Guidelines (2007).

4. Explain the four different layers and types of psychosocial support related to separation:

A. Basic services and security. This includes food, shelter, water, basic health care, etc. A psychosocial intervention may include advocating that these services are organized responsibly, safely and with the beneficiary’s involvement; that the services provided maintain the dignity of those receiving help; and that the services promote mental health and psychosocial well-being.

B. Community and family supports. This refers to the psychosocial support which may be needed by some individuals (those whose connections to family or community networks or supports have been disrupted) in order to maintain their mental health and psychosocial well-being. In most emergencies, there are significant disruptions to family and community networks due to loss, displacement, family separation, and community fears or distrust. A psychosocial response could include family tracing and reunification, assisted mourning and communal healing ceremonies, mass communication on constructive coping methods, supportive parenting programmes, formal and non-formal educational activities, livelihood activities, and social networks, such as women’s groups and youth clubs.

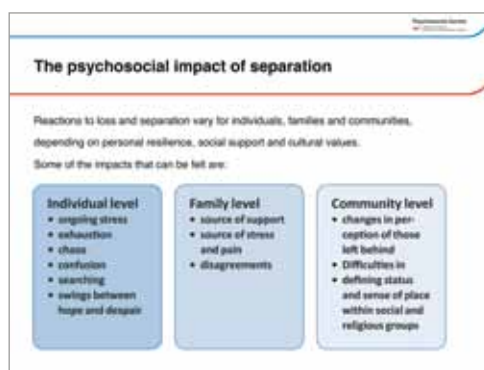
C. Focused, non-specialised supports. This refers to additional support services which may be necessary for a small number of people. Additional interventions focused on individuals, families or other groups may be required and can be carried out by trained and supervised workers (but who may not have had years of training in specialised care). For example, widows might need both emotional and financial support from community workers. This also includes basic mental health care by primary health care workers.

C. Specialised services. This includes additional support which may be required for a small percentage of the population who may experience significant difficulties in basic daily functioning. This assistance should include psychological or psychiatric support for people with severe mental disorders, if their needs are beyond the capacities of existing primary or general health services.

5. Explain that in the course of everyday Red Cross Red Crescent activities, staff and volunteers are likely to come into contact with people who have experienced some kind of personal separation. It is important to be able to assist these people without unintentionally causing additional harm. The following section examines possible psychosocial impacts of being separated.

For more information on psychosocial support, please see pages 13-25 in the field guide.

3.2: The psychosocial impact of separation (short presentation, followed by individual work and discussion)



PURPOSE

To understand the various possible impacts of being separated

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Flipchart paper, markers, pens and copies of hand-out 2 (Annex 1): The psychosocial impact of separation

PROCEDURE

1. Explain the purpose of the activity to participants and then introduce the topic by doing a short presentation:

Reactions to loss and separation will vary for individuals, families and communities, depending on personal resilience, social support and cultural values.

- At an **individual** level, the uncertainty surrounding a missing relative is a major source of on-going stress, which may lead to physical and mental exhaustion. Periods of chaos and confusion can arise, moments of searching, and fluctuations between hope and despair. The experience is devastating and exhausting. Trying to move ahead with uncertainty is emotionally taxing, and may put the individual at risk for other complications, including loss of self-efficacy, or a loss of faith and meaning in life.
- The **family** can be an important source of support, both economically and emotionally. However, in some cases it can also be a source of stress, especially when family members have difficulties in communicating with or understanding one another. Communication can be complicated within families because of complex relationships, conflicts in perceived roles or obligations, or a desire to protect one another. There may be disagreements among family members about the fate of the missing person.
- When someone disappears it may change the way the **community** perceives those left behind. There are also often difficulties in defining one's own status and sense of place within existing social and religious groups. It can be that there are no rituals or customs to ease the family's suffering by sharing it with others and paying tribute to their loved one, as in the case of a death in the family. Finding ways of preserving

the memory of someone who is missing is much harder than commemorating a death, which is generally associated with pre-defined customs and practices.



Place the words below in the circles where they belong.

• Avoidance / Withdrawal	• Refusal to accept loss
• Lack of interest in social activities	• Stigma
• Emotional isolation / Inability to engage emotionally	• Guilt / Self-accusation / Anger
• Distress / Uncertainty / Anxiety	• Disagreements over the fate of the missing person
• Undefined social status	• Absence of rituals
• Difficulties in communicating with the rest of the family	• Gaps in personal / family story
	• Swinging between hope and despair
	• Challenges with changed roles

2. Give everyone copies of hand-out 2 (Annex 1). (If you are not using hand-outs, ask participants to copy the diagram from slide 23 onto a piece of paper.) Explain that the diagram has circles which represent the individual level, family level and community or social level in life. Look at the words in the list on page 2 of hand-out 2 (or on slide 24) and work out where the words should best be placed. For example, 'Difficulties in communicating with the rest of the family' would best fit the family level.
3. Suggest they spend 15 minutes individually doing this. Then bring the group together and discuss where they placed the words.



4. Show PowerPoint slide 25 with the completed diagram.

5. Ask the participants what reactions they have witnessed in people who have been separated from loved ones.

For more information on the psychosocial impact of separation, please see pages 10-18 in the field guide.

3.3: Ambiguous loss (short presentation and group work)



PURPOSE

To understand the ambiguity when someone goes missing and how that may affect the grieving process

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Flipchart paper, markers, pens and hand-outs

PROCEDURE

1. Begin by talking again about ambiguous loss:

Ambiguous loss is defined as the absence of a loved one, where the individual's situation, location and condition are unknown. Ambiguous loss generally refers to situations where people have gone missing and are therefore physically absent, but mentally present, meaning that their families still actively seek and/or think about them.

For example, people who have lost contact with parents or siblings because of migration, have gone missing due to armed conflict or as the result of a natural disaster, for example, are all physically absent. The family cannot see them or touch them; they are not physically present. But we say that such individuals are psychologically present because their family members think about them, seek them and keep their memory alive in the hope that they will return and things will go back to being as they were.

For as long as someone is missing, uncertainty reigns; as long as there is no body or proof of death, the family cannot begin the grieving process.

In the case of a death, social customs generally dictate that the family arrange a funeral ceremony to say goodbye to the deceased; family and friends mourn the loss and begin the process of grieving. The wider community understands what is going on and participates according to social and religious norms.

The fact that the missing person might still be alive makes grieving inappropriate. The uncertainty is exhausting. There is no 'right' emotional response, no clear outcome, and therefore little comfort. In such situations the grieving process is often described as 'frozen,' meaning that people are stuck in their grief. This can potentially result in problems with coping with everyday tasks and with decision-making,

and puts individuals at longer-term risk of depression, anger issues, anxiety, substance abuse and other behavioural problems.

2. In this activity, you want to encourage participants to think about the differences between the impact of death and of disappearance on those left behind. This will help participants to understand how ambiguous loss can affect families and communities.

3. Ask participants to get into groups of three and give them ten minutes to associate the words from slide 27 with either death or disappearance.

4. Ask each group to feedback in turn. (The correct answers are in the box below.)

5. Refer to the time schedule: after lunch, the training will focus on what staff and volunteers can do to support people in coping with loss.

For more information on ambiguous loss, please see pages 10-11 in the field guide.

3.4: Grief (short presentation)

PURPOSE

To understand the grieving process

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Power point and slides or flip chart paper and pens

PROCEDURE

1. Explain the following points:

The difference between death and disappearance	
Death	Disappearance
Evidence	No evidence of death or life
Social and religious norms	No social or religious norms
Rituals (e.g. funeral, witnesses to loss)	No rituals
Clear outcome / ending of a relationship	Uncertainty of outcome (i.e. Do I grieve or hope?)
Clear start to grieving process	Only open questions with no answers
New social role	Ambiguous situation (search/wait or move on?)
No stigma – death is natural part of life	Unclear social role (i.e. wife or widow?)
	Possibility of social stigmatization, isolation and vulnerability to violence

Grief is a normal psychological reaction to loss of any kind. Grieving is a natural but painful process that allows the affected person to release the pain associated with what has been lost. It involves a process of acceptance and adjustment, leading to a stabilization of emotion and routine, and a turning to the future and moving on. It is important to keep in mind that the objective of the grieving process is not to forget the missing or deceased person, but to remember him or her in a way that causes less pain.

Supporting people in their grief

Supporting people in their grief needs to be adapted to each individual situation and to the specific cultural frame of reference. It is crucial to allow people to react in their own way to what they have lost.

Their reactions will be influenced by a number of factors:

- their relationship to the lost person
- the circumstances of the loss
- their own character traits
- the social and cultural environment.

Within families, the grieving process does not always happen in the same way or within the same time frame. Each person will respond in their own way. Supporting people in their grief therefore needs to be adapted to each individual situation and to the specific cultural frame of reference.

- It is crucial to allow people to react in their own way to what they have lost. Their reactions will be influenced by a number of factors, including their relationship to the lost person, the circumstances of the loss, their own character traits as well as the social and cultural environment.
- Knowing what to do and say when supporting people in distress can be difficult. Staff and volunteers are sometimes concerned about re-awakening feelings of grief, sadness and desperation by asking questions about the circumstances of their loved one going missing. The next session will look into this.

For more information on grief, please see pages 17-18 in the field guide.

 **LUNCH BREAK (60 MINUTES)**

Lunch break



Supporting people who have been separated

SESSION

4

90 minutes



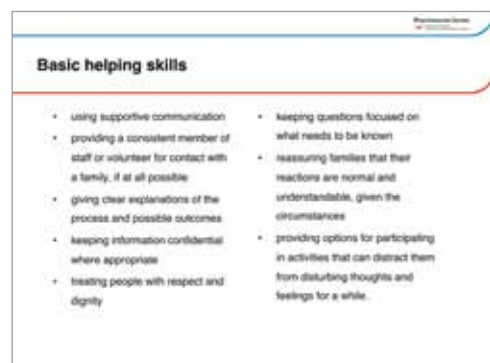
Ibrahim Malla/IFRC

Introduction



This section looks at how staff and volunteers can support families who have been separated from their loved ones. It begins with a short presentation and discussion and is followed by group work.

4.1: Basic helping skills (short presentation and discussion)



1. Begin by addressing concerns on how to approach people.

It can be difficult to know what to do and say when supporting people in distress.

Staff and volunteers are sometimes concerned about re-awakening feelings of grief, sadness and desperation by asking questions about the circumstances of their loved one going missing.

2. Emphasise the importance of basic helping skills that participants already know and use in their work.

Being a good listener and enabling people to feel safe are fundamental helping skills in all core activities.

Ask participants to name some examples. These could include:

- using supportive communication
- treating people with respect and dignity
- providing a consistent member of staff or volunteer for contact with a family, if at all possible
- giving clear explanations of the process and possible outcomes
- keeping information confidential where appropriate
- keeping questions focused on what needs to be known
- reassuring families that their reactions are normal and understandable, given the circumstances
- providing options for participating in activities that can temporarily distract them from disturbing thoughts and feelings.

Emphasise that these methods are generally used by staff and volunteers to provide effective psychosocial support. As such, they are also very important for supporting people who have been affected by separation from family members. They can help families feel more secure, understood and cared for, which in turn, will minimize risk of harm later on. Being able to talk to someone is often an important part of the coping process, may have a healing quality, and might generally be a positive experience.

3. Explain that there is a lot that staff and volunteers can do to support people in coping with their situation.

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Basic helping skills

Staff and volunteers can support families by:

- Recognizing and naming the situation as ambiguous loss
- normalising stress levels, confusion and sense of hopelessness
- creating opportunities for families to talk about the missing person
- looking for ways of rebuilding roles in the family and creating rituals to commemorate the missing person.



As a volunteer or staff, it is important to remember that your role might be to help the person in enduring the uncertainty, rather than being able to do something to alleviate the situation. Staff and volunteers can support families by:

- recognizing and naming the situation as “ambiguous loss”
- normalising stress levels, confusion and sense of hopelessness
- creating opportunities for families to talk about the missing person
- looking for ways of rebuilding roles in the family and creating rituals to commemorate the missing person.

4.2: Practising support

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Practising support (group work)

In this activity you will be doing a role play in groups of three people.
Read the scenario and divide the following roles between you:

- a helper
- a person who is separated from a loved one
- an observer.

Use basic helping skills and the pointers given in the previous slide to help support the person in their uncertainty.

- Spend 10 minutes doing the role play
- Spend 10 minutes answering the questions for feedback

**PURPOSE**

To practise supporting people who have been separated

**MATERIALS REQUIRED**

Hand-out 3 (Annex 1) or other scenarios or cases which participants may choose to share from their work. While possibly more suitable, be aware that individual cases can also be more affective for participants.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Explain that in this activity participants will be doing a role play in groups of three. One person will be a helper, one will play a person who is separated from a loved one, and one will play an observer. Ask the groups to spend ten minutes doing the role play and ten minutes answering the discussion questions from the box below. Explain that each group will be invited to share their experience after the role-play.

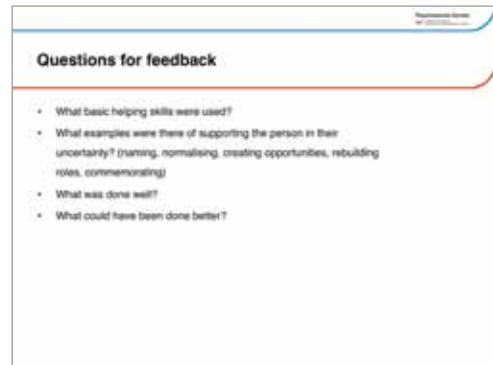
2. Divide participants into groups of three. Use one scenario per group or ask all groups to work on the same scenario. Give them time to read the scenario and to decide on roles within their groups.

3. Ask the groups to practise supporting someone who is affected by separation. Use basic helping skills and the pointers given in the presentation to help support the person during their time of uncertainty:

- naming the situation as ambiguous loss
- normalizing the stress, confusion and sense of hopelessness
- creating opportunities for families to talk about the missing person
- looking for ways of rebuilding roles in the family and creating rituals to commemorate the missing person.

4. Allow 20 minutes for the group work, followed by a plenary discussion of 15 minutes, allowing each group to give a

presentation of their experience (including a short introduction to their scenario if the groups worked on different scenarios). The presentation should address the questions listed in the box below:

**Questions for feedback**

Ask each member of the group to give feedback based on the following questions:

- What basic helping skills were used?
- What examples were there of supporting the person in their uncertainty? (naming, normalising, creating opportunities, rebuilding roles, commemorating?)
- What was done well?
- What could have been done better?

5. Close this section by making the following points:

Be careful not to make assumptions about the situation families may be facing. This is a core principle for all the work that staff and volunteers do with families experiencing loss. Take great care not to assume anything about their experience of the loss they are enduring. For example, don't assume the loss of an older person will be easier to accept than the death of a child. Don't assume the return of a family member will necessarily be welcomed once it is known what has happened to them. The long-term goal is for families to come

to terms with their loss and to find meaning in the situation, rather than blaming themselves. Achieving ‘closure’ is not to be expected. Families may gradually find themselves able to move on, simultaneously keeping hope alive for their missing loved one, while still able to make plans for the future.

As in all psychosocial support activities, there will be situations when people might need more specialised help; for example, individuals who may be at risk of harming themselves or others. Staff and volunteers should be able to recognize signs of extreme distress and know how to make referrals.

For more information on supportive communication, please see pages 22-31 in the field guide.

4.3: Delivering news (individual work and discussion)

PURPOSE

To reflect on how to deliver distressing news

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Paper, pens

PROCEDURE

1. Explain that delivering distressing news this is one of the stressors for staff and volunteers working with people who have been separated.

2. Ask the participants to imagine that they are in a situation where they have to tell someone that a person close to them has died. Ask them to think about how they might convey the news and to write down on a piece of paper the actual sentences they would use.

3. Invite some of the participants to share their examples with the rest of the group.

4. Refer to the Do's and Don'ts list on page 31 to summarise guidance.

5. Explain to participants that being prepared – both for other people's reactions as well as any possible reactions you yourself might have – can reduce stress. This is the topic for the next session.

4.4: Reunification (short presentation)

1. If time allows, use this presentation to give an overview of the reunification process.

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention the person who has died and acknowledge the loss. • Remember that grieving is a process and that the individual or family will need support long after the event has passed. • Listen to the grieving person. • Validate feelings: "This is clearly a shock to you," "I understand that this is very upsetting news for you." • Keep eye contact, show warmth and compassion. • Speak calmly and slowly. • Allow families and individuals time to react; do not be afraid of silence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't suggest replacing the person that is lost, by saying, for example, "You can have another baby." • Don't use clichés such as "Time heals all wounds," or "This will soon pass," etc. • Don't compare the way one person grieves with another. • Don't encourage the grieving person to make any big life changes or decisions. • Don't give advice or lecture the grieving person. • Don't try to change the subject when the individual is crying or wants to talk about the person who has died. • Don't touch a person without their permission.

In the event that a family or individual is able to locate the person they are looking for, reunification is the responsibility of the ICRC. This is a complex task and is only undertaken by those trained in it. However, staff and volunteers might find themselves in situations where they will need to explain the process. (See Power-Point slide 36).



2. Highlight the following seven psychosocial support elements involved:

A. Re-establishment of contact: A family reunification can be organized only after the relatives concerned have been located and contact has been restored between them, either by telephone or through the exchange of family news. (The exchange of family news

organized by the Movement enables family members to make an informed decision. It also helps the Movement to ascertain if the family and individuals are indeed related and wish to be reunited, as well as helping to identify possible obstacles).

B. Identity and kinship have both been verified.

C. Mutual consent: The formal consent of both sides is prerequisite for a family reunification. Young children should also be involved in the decision.

D. Assessment of best interests: It may be necessary to assess what is in the best interest of children and other vulnerable persons who have been separated from their families for a long time, or whose primary caregiver has died, before reuniting them with their families.

E. Primacy of safety: A family reunification can be carried out only after the safety of the beneficiaries during the journey and the security of the reunification site have been properly assessed and confirmed.

F. Logistical support: A family reunification requires safe access to the areas where the relatives are and safe and reliable transportation.

G. Authorization of the authorities: In most cases, the authorities should, in principle, be notified beforehand and their approval obtained.

For more information on Restoring Family Links and the Family Links Network, please see pages 9-22 in the field guide and at www.familylinks.icrc.org.

3. Close this session by mentioning the importance of self-care.

Supporting people who have been separated from family members may put staff and volunteers in stressful situations where reactions can be unpredictable, such as having to inform someone that their loved one has died or fallen sick.

It is important therefore that staff and volunteers are supported too and know how they can take care of themselves. The next session looks at how to deal with the demands of the job, and how National Societies can actively support their staff and volunteers.



Self-care

SESSION

5

60 minutes

Juozas Cernius, IFRC



Introduction

The psychosocial well-being of staff and volunteers and the quality of their work can be affected when stress from work is not addressed. It is therefore very important for National Societies to create a

framework that is supportive and protective, where everyone understands the risks of the job and actively supports resilience and well-being, both in beneficiaries and in fellow staff and volunteers.

5.1: Stress on staff and volunteers (group work)

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Stress on staff and volunteers (group work)

Look at the case study and discuss the following questions in groups of three or four:

- What sources of stress for the staff member or volunteer do you see in this situation?
- If you wish, share examples of stress that you have experienced.



PURPOSE

To examine what sources of stress there are for staff and volunteers in the work they do in supporting people affected by separation

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Hand-out 4: Volunteer case (Annex 1). If preferred, the case can be replaced with a case relevant to the local context.

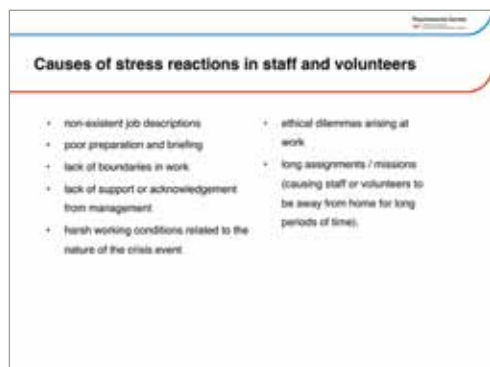
PROCEDURE

1. Explain the activity to participants. Ask them to look at the case study and discuss the following questions in small groups:

- What sources of stress for the staff member or volunteer do you see in this situation?
- If you wish, share examples of stress that you have experienced in your work with people affected by separation.

2. Now divide into groups of three and distribute the hand-outs. After 15 minutes, ask the groups to report back the sources of stress for the volunteer or staff member. Be clear that you do not expect participants to share their own stories unless they wish to.

3. Write up on flipchart paper the sources of stress that are mentioned. Once all the groups have given their feedback, add other sources of stress that they might not have thought of from the list below:



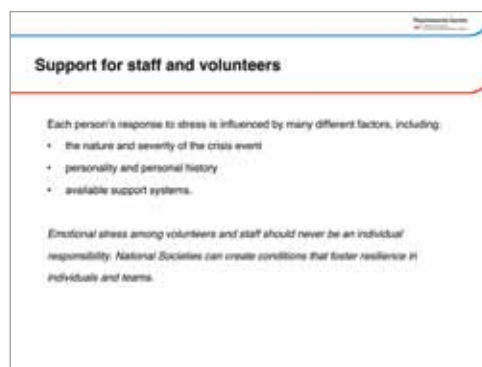
Working conditions and organizational arrangements often causes stress reactions in staff and volunteers. These may include:

- non-existing job descriptions
- poor preparation and briefing
- lack of boundaries for work
- lack of support or acknowledgement from management
- harsh working conditions related to the nature of the crisis event
- ethical dilemmas arising at work
- long assignments / missions (causing staff or volunteers to be away from home for long periods of time.)

It is often not the crisis events themselves that cause stress for staff and volunteers, who generally tend to find meaning in their work, which helps them cope with the situations they are exposed to.

4. Ask what participants think about these work-based sources of stress.

5.2: Support for staff and volunteers (short presentation and discussion)



PURPOSE

To identify the ways that National Societies can best support their staff and volunteers

MATERIALS REQUIRED

None

PROCEDURE

1. Start by talking about the fact that reactions to stress are very individual. Each person's response to stress – whether they develop psychological problems or show resilience – is influenced by many different factors, including the nature and severity of the crisis event, personality and personal history, and available support systems.

However, emotional stress among volunteers and staff should never be an individual responsibility. National Societies can create conditions that foster resilience in individuals and teams.



2. Refer to the ways that National Societies can support their staff and volunteers.

One of the most important support measures that managers can put in place is a supportive and open atmosphere for their teams. Staff and volunteers will then feel more comfortable in asking for support when they need it. Talking openly about stress (without forcing anyone to talk), allowing for individual ways of coping, being available for supervision and creating a safe environment by respecting confidentiality will go a long way towards creating a culture of mutual support.

National societies can create conditions that foster resilience by:

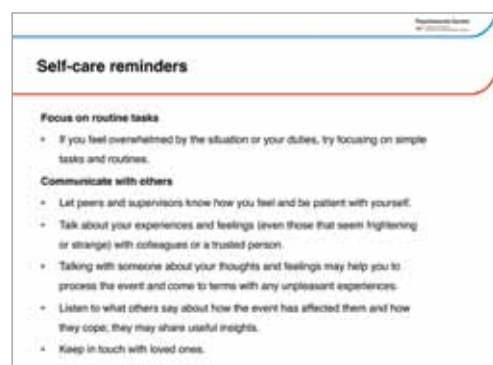
- encouraging reasonable working conditions through policies and strategies
- providing accessible guidance and support from managers and peers; normalizing responses
- providing psycho-education regarding emotional stressful work
- creating an organizational culture where people can talk openly and share problems, respecting the principle of confidentiality and where getting together after a critical event is the norm, e.g. a peer support system.
- arranging regular meetings which bring all staff and/or volunteers together and foster a feeling of belonging to a team

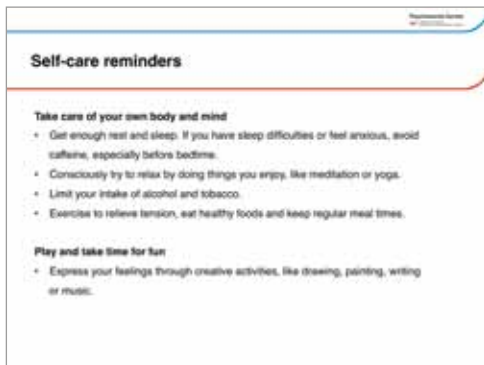
3. Ask participants to think about the scenarios they discussed in section 5.2. How would these support measures help in relieving stress?

4. Refer also to self-care reminders:

Staff and volunteers can use good self-care strategies themselves to take care of themselves while working in difficult situations.

Being proactive about self-care will help staff and volunteers to withstand the difficulties in their work, and will also enable them to help families affected by separation more effectively.





Here is a list of examples of self-care reminders:

Focus on routine tasks.

- If you feel overwhelmed by the situation or your duties, try focusing on simple tasks and routines.

Communicate with others.

- Let peers and supervisors know how you feel and be patient with yourself.
- Talk about your experiences and feelings (even those that seem frightening or strange) with colleagues or a trusted person.
- Talking with someone about your thoughts and feelings may help you to process the event and come to terms with any unpleasant experiences.
- Listen to what others say about how the event has affected them and how they cope; they may share useful insights.
- Keep in touch with loved ones.

Take care of your own body and mind.

- Get enough rest and sleep. If you have sleep difficulties or feel anxious, avoid caffeine, especially before bedtime.
- Consciously try to relax by doing things you enjoy, like meditation or yoga.
- Limit your intake of alcohol and tobacco.
- Exercise to relieve tension, eat healthy foods and keep regular meal times.

Play and take time for fun.

- Express your feelings through creative activities, like drawing, painting, writing or music.

For more information on self-care, please see pages 37-38 in the field guide.

Winding up the day



This closing activity gives everyone an opportunity to share their impressions of the day and give feedback on the training.

1. Ask participants to stand in a circle. Invite each person to step into the circle one at a time and say one thing that they will take with them from the day, prefaced by the phrase: “I check out with...” or “I leave the group today with...” Things to take away could be an “aha moment”, new knowledge, something that surprised them, a feeling, or an observation.
2. It is good practice to get feedback about the training by doing an evaluation. Allow enough time for participants to individually fill in an evaluation questionnaire before they leave (Annex 2). Alternatively, do a group evaluation, e.g. by using the following questions:
 - What are the psychological and social reactions to separation from family members?
 - How do you best support people who have been separated?
 - How do you take care of yourself in this work?



Annex 1 Hand-outs

Survivors found after Turkish earthquake

HAND
OUT **1**

PAGE 1/1

Rescue and relief efforts continue as thousands are left without shelter

Five people rescued Monday from the rubble in eastern Turkey, after a 7.2-magnitude earthquake levelled buildings and killed more than 270 people. Four of the five survivors were located after one called for help with his cell phone. Dozens of people were trapped in mounds of concrete, twisted steel and construction debris after scores of buildings in two cities and mud-bricked homes in nearby villages collapsed or were severely damaged in the earthquake. Worst hit was Ercis, an eastern city of 75,000 people that is near the Iranian border and lies in one of Turkey's most earthquake-prone zones. About 80 multistorey buildings collapsed in Ercis.

After calling a police emergency line on his mobile phone and describing his location, Yalcin Akay was dug out from a collapsed six-storey building in the city. He had suffered a leg injury. Three others, including two children, were also rescued from the same building 20 hours after the quake struck, officials said.

Later, a 21-year-old woman, Tugba Altinkaynak, was rescued after being trapped beneath rubble for about 27 hours. There was no immediate information on her condition. Her father, Nevzat, said she was at a family lunch with 12 other relatives when the quake hit. Four of them were pulled out alive earlier.

After more than 200 aftershocks rocked the area, rescuers continued sifting through mounds of debris for the missing as family members waited anxiously nearby. Cranes and other heavy equipment lifted slabs of concrete, allowing residents to dig for the missing with shovels. Generator-powered floodlights ran all night so the rescues could continue.

Aid groups scrambled to set up tents, field hospitals and kitchens to help the thousands left homeless or too afraid to re-enter their homes. Many exhausted residents spent the night outside, lighting fires to keep warm.

"We stayed outdoors all night," Serpil Bilici said. "I could not sleep at all." Referring to her 6-year-old daughter, she added: "My children, especially the little one, were terrified. I grabbed her and rushed out when the quake hit, we were all screaming." The bustling, larger city of Van, about 90 kilometres, or 55 miles, south of Ercis, also sustained substantial damage, but Interior Minister Idris Naim Sahin said search efforts there were winding down. The Minister said he expected the death toll in Ercis to rise, but not as much as initially feared. He said rescue teams were searching for survivors in the ruins of 47 buildings where dozens could be trapped, including a café.

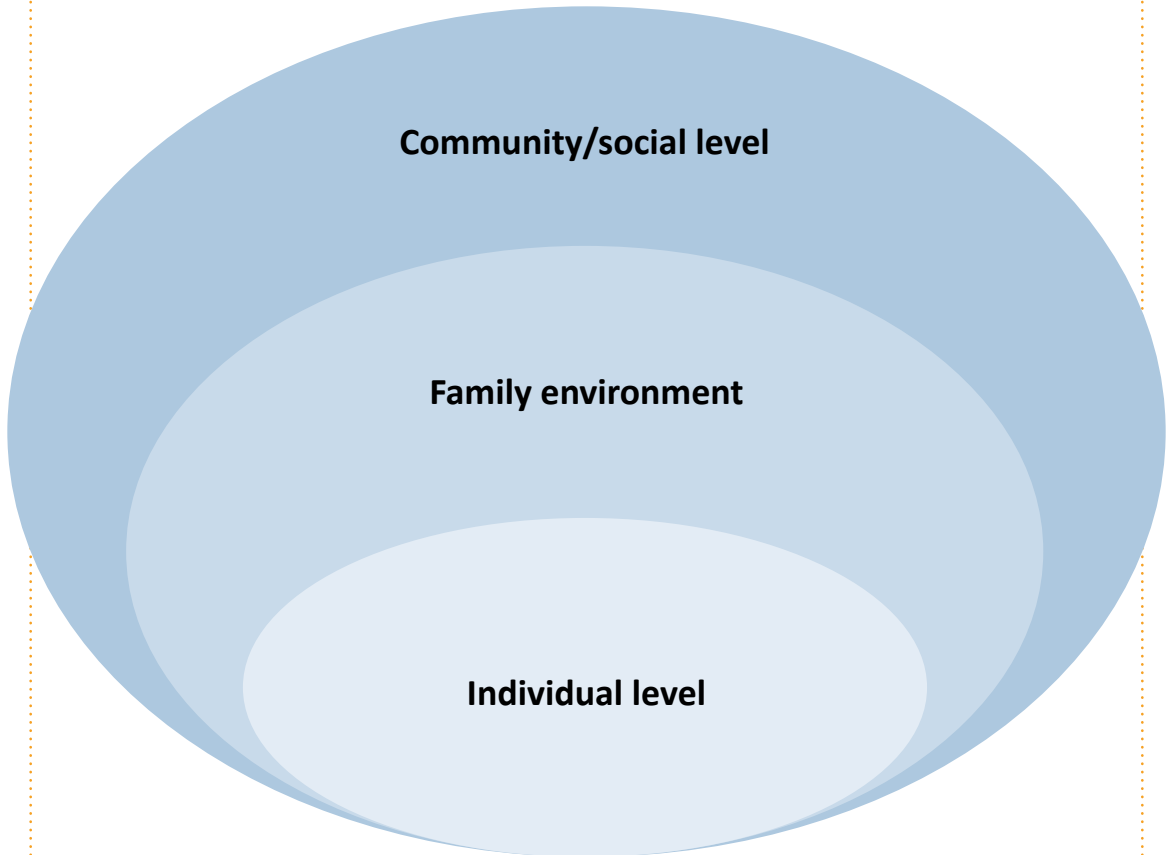
Ref: World News, Global Edition of the New York Times. Tuesday, 25 October 2011. AP – Ercis, Turkey

**The psychosocial impact of separation
from family members**

**HAND
OUT**

2

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The psychosocial impact of separation from family members

HAND
OUT

2

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After placing the words in the circle, tick them off in the box to the left.

	Avoidance / Withdrawal
	Lack of interest in social activities
	Emotional isolation / Inability to engage emotionally
	Distress / Uncertainty / Anxiety
	Undefined social status
	Difficulties in communicating with the rest of the family
	Refusal to accept loss
	Stigma
	Guilt / Self-accusation / Anger
	Disagreements over the fate of the missing person
	Absence of rituals
	Gaps in personal / family story
	Swinging between hope and despair
	Challenges with changed roles

Cases

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Scenario 1: Children separated from parents

Fourteen-year-old Jacob and his two younger brothers were in the boarding school when the shooting began. They had left their mother in the morning, unknowing that the same afternoon indiscriminate gunfire would separate them from her and force hundreds of their countrymen to flee their country. Their father, who was a soldier, had died in combat several months ago.

“When the shooting began, we all started running, we were so afraid... We reached the centre of town and managed to get into cars going towards the country border... When we reached the border we got into a lorry that took us to this place... It all happened so fast. We were constantly looking out for our mother but she was nowhere to be found...” Jacob explains looking despairingly towards the shelters of the refugee camp. “She might have gone to visit our aunt in the capital two hours’ drive from our town. That was where the gunfire started...” says Jacob.

Jacob and his brothers are now staying close to some of their friends’ families in the refugee camp. These families help the three boys in receiving a share of the limited supplies in the camp. But they cannot fill the void created by the loss of their mother: “I cry myself to sleep every night and wake up hearing her voice in the nearby shelters, but it’s never her. I don’t know where she is – or even if she’s still alive, but I keep telling my brothers that she’ll find us soon...,” says Jacob. “But I don’t know, and I don’t know what to do... We have nothing here.”

Scenario 2: Woman lost her husband during typhon

On 8 November 2013, Typhon Haiyan hit the Philippines, separating thousands of people from their loved ones. One of them is Chloe, a 33-year old woman who lost her husband in the typhoon. In Chloe’s village, most of the women took refuge in a community centre on higher ground while the men stayed behind to protect their homes. No one in the village had foreseen that the typhoon would cause so much death and destruction. “When my daughter and I left my husband, we did not even kiss him goodbye. I thought we would soon be together again,” says Chloe. But most of the men in the village died in the attempt to save their homes. Chloe’s husband was one of them. “I regret that I didn’t tell him to come with us, but I didn’t know this could happen,” says Chloe.

Chloe found her husband’s body in the ruins. “Until then I didn’t believe that he was dead,” she says. Chloe’s main concern now is how to arrange the funeral. “I have no money to pay for a burial or ceremony and I have no home to protect him until the burial – how can I protect the soul of my loved one? How can I pay him my respects?”

Chloe is also concerned about how to protect her 10-year-old daughter’s health. “My husband was the one who supported us; he was the only one working. If my daughter falls ill, I will not be able to bring her to a hospital and I would have no money to pay for her medicine.”

Cases

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Scenario 3: Man separated from his family during political asylum

One year ago, James had to flee his country for reasons of political asylum. He left his wife and two children behind and has not been in touch with them ever since. James feels safe now, but is afraid that his flight has caused troubles for his family. He often finds himself struggling with questions like: “How could I leave my wife and my children behind?”, “Will I ever see them again?”, “Are they still alive?”, “Are they looking for me?” and “How can I move on without them?”

James has deliberately tried not to contact his family. By contacting the family he would put both himself and his family at great risk. He is afraid that he will never be able to return to his home country and that he will not be able to see his children grow up.

James says that he often feels that everyday activities have no meaning. With no one to take care of other than himself, he often spends days lazing about. At times, James spends most of the social benefits he receives from his host country on alcohol. “Sometimes I wish I could just rewind time and change my actions, but I can’t. I feel lost and trapped in a deadlock,” he says.

Scenario 4: A mother separated from her son during violent conflict

“The demonstrations turned more and more violent, and my son became more and more involved in the protests. I used to call him every day to make sure that he was okay but one day he didn’t answer my call...” says Larisa, mother of 22-year old Yosip. There is no police record of him being arrested and the police have now opened a murder investigation.

“He was here in the morning before he disappeared. We had breakfast together...but he had to leave in a rush because of a sudden escalation of the conflict. I just wish I had begged him to stay...I just wish I had done something...” says Larisa, as she wipes her tears and continues. “I called him later the same evening, but his phone was switched off. I knew immediately that something was wrong.”

Three months have now passed and Larisa still hasn’t heard from Yosip. Larisa finds it hard to talk to the rest of the family about her thoughts and feelings. She feels guilty and finds herself in a constant state of nervousness. “I’m constantly thinking that he could be knocking on the door at any moment and whenever I hear small noises in front of the house, the first thing that comes to my mind is that my son is back,” says Larisa. At other times she feels that she will never see her son again.

Volunteer case

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Volunteering in a refugee camp in Jordan

Due to the civil war in Syria, some 250,000 people have fled into Jordan where they are being sheltered in refugee camps. Leyla is 22 and has been volunteering in a psychosocial services centre at a refugee camp for two years. She is mainly organizing psychosocial activities for youth and crafts for woman and children.

“I believe the people who come to the centre benefit a lot from our activities,” Leyla says. “They gain new skills and get a break from the everyday in the refugee camp. But it’s very emotional sometimes, because you hear terrible stories and you feel sad for them. This morning I had a visit from a mother and her child. The woman told me that her husband (the child’s father) was in Syria, and they hadn’t been in touch with him for the past month. The woman got really sad and I tried to comfort her. In those situations you have to stay strong. That can be really hard,” Leyla says and continues: “In such cases, it’s really good to talk to the other volunteers about how you’re feeling. We’re like a small family now, and we’ve quickly become really confident with each other. But what is especially frustrating is that you are not able to change the situation for the refugees. When they leave the psychosocial services centre they will still have to face their losses and the uncertainty of their situation.”

“When I come home after a day at the centre, I’m usually really tired and I mostly just feel like being on my own. I don’t feel like going out with my friends these days. To me it sometimes seems like my friends are just ignoring what is happening to our neighbouring country. But I can’t stop thinking that it could just as well have been us. At other times you have families who smile and laugh and you leave the centre with such a good feeling,” says Leyla.



Annex 2 Evaluation questionnaire

Please give your responses to the following statements using the scale below:

Very poor	Unsatisfactory		Satisfactory		Good		Excellent	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Theoretical levels of teaching were appropriate to me.	
Session 1 (Causes of separation) was of relevance to me in my work.	
Session 2 (Consequences of separation) was of relevance to me in my work.	
Session 3 (Psychosocial impact of being separated) was of relevance to me in my work.	
Session 4 (How to support) was of relevance to me in my work.	
Session 5 (Self-care) was of relevance to me in my work.	
Trainer's feedback for activities/exercises was helpful (if relevant).	
Group feedback and discussion were helpful.	
Activities in the training were culturally relevant/appropriate.	
I gained useful skills and experience from the training.	
Briefly comment on which skills, if relevant, you learned from this module.	
More time might be used on: (please state)	
Less time might be allowed for: (please state)	
Overall rating of content: (use scale above)	
Overall rating of presentation: (use scale above)	
Any other comments:	

Broken Links

Psychosocial support for people separated from family members

Training module

Broken Links: Psychosocial support for people separated from family members was developed to support staff and volunteers in a wide range of settings where they may come in contact with families who have been separated from their loved ones. The material focuses on the causes and consequences of being separated from family members, the psychosocial impacts of separation, how staff and volunteers can support people in this situation, as well as self-care for staff and volunteers.

For training purposes a set of PowerPoint slides can be downloaded from www.pscentre.org.

Broken Links: Psychosocial support for people separated from family members (Training Module) is designed to complement the *Broken Links* field guide, which is also available for download from the PS Centre website.

Psychosocial Centre

 International Federation
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