

RSTP Bulletin

The latest news and updates on the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program

Refugee Mental Health

There are many factors that affect a person's mental state and health. For sponsored refugees, these factors can include losing their homeland, their way of life, the safety and security of their homes and putting their children's education on hold for indefinite amounts of time. While their resilience has allowed newcomers to overcome tremendous adversity, sponsors should be ready to help those with mental health concerns access the help they need.

Recognizing and treating resettled refugees' mental health problems may be challenging due to differences in language, culture and specific stressors associated with resettlement. As with any other illness, mental health requires immediate medical attention and assistance.



Refugees,
Mental Health
and Sponsorship

This RSTP video on [Refugee Mental Health and Sponsorship](#) presents some of the challenges of sponsoring refugees with mental health issues. It also has helpful tips for supporting these newcomers.

Highlights from the Video

There is a close relationship between having lived through torture and/or war, and mental health. Certain groups of refugees are at higher risk of developing a mental health problem than others. Those groups include:

- People who have experienced severe trauma
- Victims of torture
- People who were imprisoned
- People who have experienced severe deprivation
- People who had pre-existing mental health problems; and
- People who have no family or social support.

To provide appropriate support, it helps to understand the major factors that affect newcomers' mental health and wellbeing once they are resettled in Canada. Added to the effects of events experienced in the country of origin and during their escape, the following in-Canada factors affect refugees' mental health:

- The ability to speak the language
- Access to education
- Access to jobs
- Housing
- Social support; and
- Income

Misconceptions and barriers to Mental Health

It is a common misconception that all refugees develop mental health problems due to their experiences. Statistics show that refugees have lower rates of mental health concerns than would be expected of those who have undergone tremendous adversity. Not all sponsored refugees who have faced hardship have mental health issues.

Something to be aware of is cultural stigma about mental health. This awareness can help sponsors work with newcomers to break the silence of mental health-related concerns.

There are many other barriers that prevent refugees from getting the help they need. Some of these barriers are:

- Lack of mental health education and awareness;
- Not speaking the language;
- Fear of losing status;
- Disparities in mental healthcare access among different racial and ethnic groups; and
- Costs.

How Sponsors Can Help

- Recognize the newcomer's obstacles.
- Educate yourself about the resources related to mental health in the settlement community.
- Connect newcomer(s) to community mental health services [in their area](#) and to appropriate resources.
- Support them during their transition by actively listening, without being judgmental.
- Be responsive when the topic of mental health issues comes up.

The Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project

You can gain expertise and skills on how to support refugee mental health by taking courses offered through the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)'s IRCC-funded **Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project (IRMHP)**. The IRMHP offers free online training, tools and resources to settlement, social and health service professionals working with immigrants and refugees across Canada.

For more information contact CAMH at irmhproject@camh.ca

To register click: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IRMHP_CourseRegistration

Resources

- [Mental health care in Canada: Where to find help](#)
- [Mental health support: Get help](#)
- [Addictions Treatment Helplines in Canada](#)
- [E-Mental Health](#)
- [Mental Health Resources in Canada by Province](#)
- [Provincial Programs and Services – Newfoundland and Labrador](#)



Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)

Refugees sponsored under the **Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)** program have special needs that will likely result in a longer or more difficult period of integration in Canada, due to:

- Trauma from violence or torture;
- Medical disabilities;
- Effects of systemic discrimination; or,
- Large family units (such as a single parent with several children).

Under the JAS program, the government and private sponsors support refugees for up to 24 months, depending on the needs of the resettled refugee. In a few cases, the private sponsor may support refugees for up to 36 months. These refugees get income support from the Government of Canada. They are matched with a private sponsorship group to help them adjust to life in Canada through settlement help and emotional support.

Some refugees are identified overseas for the JAS program due to special needs. Others are converted into JAS cases after they arrive in Canada if it becomes clear that they need more support.

JAS refugee profiles can only be picked up by SAHs and their constituent groups.



Photo: UNHCR

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Many In-Canada JAS Refugees are waiting to be sponsored!

Including

Refugee PROFILE #: 1446-08-18

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Winnipeg, MB

Linked Application: 1447-08-18

IRCC Local Office: Winnipeg, MB

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Iraq

FAMILY SIZE: One

Family composition: A 63 year old Iraqi woman and her family are settling into Winnipeg, MB.

Background: She has no formal education, and is illiterate. The language barrier has caused difficulty in adjusting to Canadian society. She has a settlement counsellor and is enrolled in family therapy.

Special needs: She faces challenges related to language, finances and communication. As an older widow she would greatly benefit from the support of a sponsor.

Support needed: A sponsor could assist her in culturally

adapting to Canada, practicing English, attending medical appointments and learning how the transportation system works. A sponsor's additional support will help her better adjust to life in Canada. She is unable to work due to her age. Her son is included in the linked profile, **1447-08-18**.

Refugee PROFILE #: 1782-10-18

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Calgary, AB

Linked Applications: 1783-10-18 (Son);

1784-10-18 (Mother-in-law)

IRCC Local Office: Calgary, AB

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Iraq

FAMILY SIZE: 5

Family composition: An Iraqi single mother with five children and a mother-in-law, who are included on linked profiles.

Background: The mother and her children were assigned to a linguistically and religiously appropriate resettlement counsellor, who has helped with settlement services and support. She has accessed resources in the community so that she and her family have access to programs, and are connected with a host family volunteer.

Special needs: The mother continues to struggle with daily life. She requires extra support to help her resettle because of past trauma, lack of formal education, and low urban living skills. She has no formal education in Kurmanji or Arabic. She struggles to learn English while caring for her ill mother-in-law. The language barrier has affected her job search and overall settlement.

Support needed: The family needs additional support with managing logistics and transportation for medical appointments (physical and mental health needs). A sponsor could help the family navigate the healthcare and public transit systems and give her useful information on adapting to life in Canada. They could provide support for the challenges of raising a large family, alone, in an unfamiliar environment. Her four sons have unique challenges as newcomer teens. A sponsor could allow the mother to informally practice her English, and gain greater self-sufficiency. She will benefit from gaining independence and confidence as she slowly makes Calgary, AB her home.



Photo: Human Rights Watch



Refugee PROFILE #: 1496-08-18

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: London

IRCC Local Office: London, ON

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Iraq

FAMILY SIZE: 2

Family composition: An Iraqi single mother and her 10 month old son, recently arrived.

Special needs: She was in a vulnerable situation in her country of asylum, requiring medical attention and help with depression.

Support needed: The In-Canada JAS program could help her overcome language barriers and some of her trauma may be alleviated. The challenge of raising a child alone could also be eased. Having someone with

her through her transition will help her gain confidence. She also needs help connecting with relevant services. These will eventually help her gain stability and independence in Canada.

For more information about the JAS program or to get more on these JAS Refugee Profiles, contact our Refugee Resettlement Project Worker at paznavhezadeh@rstp.ca or visit the RSTP website - [BVOR page](#)

Upcoming RSTP Workshops & Webinars

Workshops

Groups of Five & Community Sponsors: Review of Requirements and Forms

Date: Saturday, November 24, 2018
Time: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm MST
Where: Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, 1111-11 Ave SW, Room: 315, Calgary AB
To register, please click [here](#) or contact Anoush Newman at 403. 515-5868 or mnewman@rstp.ca

Emotional Fatigue and Self-Care for Sponsors

Date: Wednesday, November 28, 2018
Time: 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm EST
Where: Catholic Crosscultural Services Mississauga, 3660 Hurontario Street, 7th floor, Mississauga, ON L5B 3C4.

To register, please click [here](#)

Introduction to Private Sponsorship & Free Legal Clinic (in English & Tigrinya)

Date: Thursday, November 29, 2018
Time: 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm EST
Where: Hintonburg Community Centre, Basement Room #1, 1064 Wellington Street West, Ottawa, ON K1Y 2X5

To register, please click [here](#)

Refugee SSP clinic for G5s in Halifax

Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2018
Time: 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm
Where: 6061 University Avenue, Room 204, Halifax, Nova Scotia

To register, please email rsspahalifax@gmail.com

Introduction to Private Sponsorship Program (in English & Amharic)

Date: Friday, November 30, 2018
Time: 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm EST
Where: Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, 945 Wellington Street West, Ottawa

To register, please click [here](#)

Webinars

Supporting Settlement and Integration

Date: Tuesday, November 20, 2018
Time: 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM MST
To register, please click [here](#)

Preparing for Month 13

Date: Thursday, November 22, 2018
Time: 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM MST
To register, please click [here](#)

Family Reunification under the PSR

Date: Friday, November 23, 2018
Time: 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm EDT
To register, please click [here](#)

Overview of PSR Changes Affecting Guidelines and Forms post-May 1, 2018

Date: Wednesday, November 28, 2018
Time: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm EDT
To register, please click [here](#)

Preparing for Visa Office Interviews

Date: Friday, November 30, 2018
Time: 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm EDT
To register, please click [here](#)

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.rstp.ca/en/training/>



Refugee SSP training in Winnipeg, MB, with RSTP trainer Gelila

Refugee
Sponsorship
Training
Program



CCS
Catholic Crosscultural Services



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada