



EPHA Webinar 27/05/2020

**Ensuring NGO staff mental
health protection for
mitigating the COVID
human rights impact**

NGO staff working with refugees

- During the COVID-19 crisis NGO staff remained in the front line, in order to help beneficiaries deal with the disruption of services, thus exposing themselves to various stressors
- In the context of the ongoing refugee crisis NGO staff helping asylum seekers, and refugees living in refugee camps had to deal with the limitation of freedom of movement imposed in many camps throughout Europe
- More particularly in refugee camps in Greece freedom of movement remains limited to date (set to remain in effect at least until the 7th of June)
- Stressors include witnessing abuse, domestic violence, panic attacks, impact of disruption of services to the beneficiaries, stress and depressive symptoms among beneficiaries.
- Furthermore staff could potentially experience feelings of isolation, stress and mood swings while working remotely.

What can we do to directly support NGO staff mental health?

- Clinical Supervision:
 - According to Milne (2007) *“clinical supervision is the formal provision, by approved supervisors, of a relationship-based education and training that is work-focused and which manages, supports, develops and evaluates the work of colleague/s. The main methods that supervisors use are corrective feedback on the supervisee’s performance, teaching, and collaborative goal-setting. It therefore differs from related activities, such as mentoring and coaching, by incorporating an evaluative component. Supervision’s objectives are “normative” (e.g. quality control), “restorative” (e.g. encourage emotional processing) and “formative” (e.g. maintaining and facilitating supervisees’ competence, capability and general effectiveness).”* D Milne (2007). An empirical definition of clinical supervision. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 46, 437–447.
- Psychoeducational trainings with an aim to empower NGO staff while working with beneficiaries
- Focus on self-help techniques for anxiety and stress

How did HumanRights360 ensure staff mental health?

- Prior to the lockdown due to COVID-19, HR360 staff that is working directly with beneficiaries in refugees camps and urban settings received monthly supervision from an accredited clinical supervisor. During the supervisory sessions staff was able to discuss areas of concern.
- During the lockdown supervisory meetings continued online and staff was able to bring forward their experiences while working with refugees living in camps and urban settings.
- Our staff has been consistently giving positive feedback for the provision of supervisory meetings.
- Furthermore, during the lockdown an online psychoeducational training on Psychological First Aid (PFA) was conducted in order to empower staff working with beneficiaries in distress.
- We implemented a full protocol on protective measures ensuring the health of beneficiaries and staff thus relieving fears around contracting COVID-19.

Human Rights 360 further actions

- As a fund operator in Greece, HumanRights360 is looking at funding organizations that offer clinical supervision for NGO staff working with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.
- At the advocacy level HumanRights360 remains committed to bringing forward any issues relating to mental health services access for all, which in turn can affect NGO staff working with such groups.



Thank you for your attention!