

# INTERVENTION

Journal of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Conflict Affected Areas

## *Call for papers*

### **Mental health and psychosocial support in Afghanistan**

Afghanistan and its national institutions, once on a par with neighbouring countries, is now in ruins following almost 40 years of continuous armed conflict. Yet, regardless of ongoing conflict, since 2002, Afghans have been working tirelessly to rebuild, develop and maintain their national institutions. In recognition of the impact of conflict on mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, one of the first (re)built was mental health as part of the *National Strategy for a Mentally Healthy Afghanistan*, which was completed in 2014. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Public Health, professional psychiatric care is now part of the basic package of Health Services, and primary care doctors assisted by paraprofessionals are available to diagnose and treat people with mental health, neurological and substance use disorders.

However, the National Strategy also noted that nearly 40 years of armed conflict has overstressed many of the protective factors that were inherent in Afghan society. Many people experience psychological sequelae of social problems from the direct effects of conflict such as injury, loss and exile. Many more experience the indirect effects of conflict: such as erosion of family structures; uncertainty about the future; stressors affecting familial and communal relations; and economic deprivation due to low levels of growth (caused by ongoing violence). In fact, approximately 80% of Afghans who seek mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) are experiencing adversity related distress and non-psychotic disorders, requiring professional counselling and psychosocial supports, as differentiated from medical psychiatric care.

Therefore, at this moment, a project to educate Afghan professional psychologists, psychological counsellors and clinical social workers to address these needs in communities around Afghanistan is underway. The graduates would work in schools, juvenile justice facilities, child protection and women's support facilities, as well as in nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). The faculty members charged with teaching these subjects at University level have discovered a dearth of literature on relevant issues for Afghan families and communities, on concepts of psychosocial wellbeing within an Afghan context, and on Afghan specific programmes that include culturally specific ideas and concepts to support wellbeing among ordinary Afghans. They also noted that few publications document the work of existing and developing Afghan programmes to use in Afghan classrooms.

Therefore, this *Special Issue of Intervention* seeks to focus on articles and field reports that are relevant for MHPSS in Afghanistan and can be used for teaching and capacity building at university level in Afghanistan. While the obvious preference is for submissions with a focus on Afghanistan, other relevant papers on this topic are also welcome for this upcoming *Special Issue* of the journal in autumn 2018.

### **Submission guidelines**

Papers will be selected on their relevance to the field, applicability, methodological rigour and level of innovation. The editors want to collect the widest possible range of experiences. Therefore, we encourage short papers with carefully selected key information. Full papers (for peer review) can be up to 5000 words (including references and tables). Field reports (also peer reviewed) and personal reflections are welcome, but should be no longer than 3000 words.

### **Extended deadline for submissions: 30 April 2018**

Only electronic submissions will be accepted. Please submit at:  
<http://www.journalonweb.com/intv/>

For more information or discussion of potential ideas, please contact:

- Marian Tankink (Editor-in-chief), [m.tankink@wartrauma.nl](mailto:m.tankink@wartrauma.nl)
- Martha Bragin (Guest co-editor), [marthabragin@verizon.net](mailto:marthabragin@verizon.net)
- Bree Akesson (Guest co-editor), [bakesson@wlu.ca](mailto:bakesson@wlu.ca)
- Bezhan Ayubi, (Guest co-editor), [bezhanayubi100@gmail.com](mailto:bezhanayubi100@gmail.com)