

Supporting the Emotional Well-being of Afghan Newcomers

April 4, 2024

» Agenda

- About NRC-RIM
- About Afghan newcomers
- Challenges to providing mental health support
- Culturally-relevant tools for service providers
- Example from the field
- Q&A

>> Speakers



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Communications Strategist
NRC-RIM



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Program Officer
IRC



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Senior Director
IRC



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Wellness Specialist
IRC Sacramento



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Community Wellness
Specialist
IRC Sacramento



»» About NRC-RIM

The National Resource Center for
Refugees, Immigrants and Migrants

>> History

- Funded by CDC, housed at University of Minnesota
- Established in Oct. 2020 as part of COVID-19 response
- Work with organizations serving RIM communities that are disproportionately impacted by health inequities



>> Goals

- **Strengthen partnerships** between health departments + communities
- **Support health departments + CBOs** that work with refugees, immigrants, + migrants
- **Reduce health disparities** + increase health equity

>> What We Do



Promising Practices
+ Toolkits



Health Education
+ Communications



Online Training



Technical Assistance



Pilot Projects



Dissemination

>> Core Partners



>> Our Work Today

SUMMER SAFETY TIPS



PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM LEAD



WOMEN'S WELLNESS



RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES ARE PREVENTABLE





»» Background and Context



AFGHANISTAN

Administrative Divisions



»» Recent Conflicts

- 1929, 1930 – Soviet Invasion
- 1979-1989 – Soviet-Afghan War
- 2001 – American Invasion
- 2001 – 2021 – U.S. War in Afghanistan

» Forced Displacement to the US



Rick Loomis/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images

» Forced Displacement to the US



Reuters



Reuters

»» Forced Displacement to the US





» Challenges to Mental Health Support

Contributors to Mental Health Concerns

- Traumatic experiences
- Life Stressors
- Lack of Social Supports
- Loss
- Uncertainty
- Genetics
- Temperament



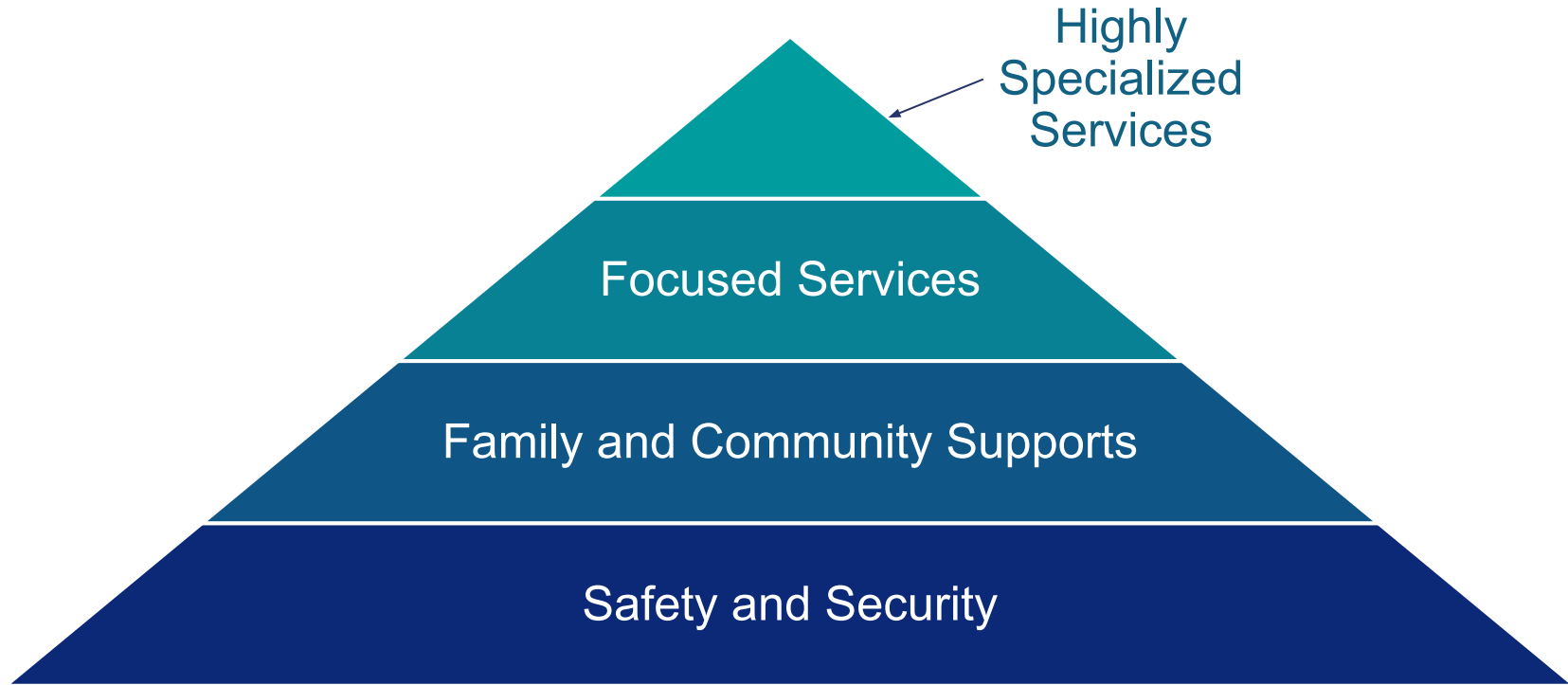
» Common Mental Health Issues

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Traumatic Stress

»» Barriers to Mental Health Access

- Language
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Insurance
- Available providers
- Trained providers
- Other priority needs
- Causality
- Stigma

» Best Approaches – Mental Health and Psychosocial Support





» Resources for Organizations Supporting Afghan Newcomers

» Mental Health + Stress Collection

- Supports adults in managing their own stress as well as helping their children and teens cope
- Covers a broad spectrum of topics, from establishing healthy routines to who to call in a crisis
- Customizable and rigorously translated and culturally validated

MANAGING STRESS IN A NEW COUNTRY



Afghan people who are forced to leave their country and start over in a new place have great strength and bravery.

It is also a very difficult thing to do. It is common for people who have experienced difficult things to have feelings like fear, anger, sadness and sorrow at the same time that they feel relieved or glad to be safe.

Stress is the feeling of being overwhelmed with worry because of a difficult situation. Stress can change how people think, feel and act.



Kite flying is a great way to combine many strategies that help us with our health and mood. Use kite flying to spend time with family and friends, and move your body. You can also use kite flying as an opportunity to practice breathing slowly and deeply. Create a routine with kite flying by practicing the activity at the same time every week or month.

People can manage stress with routines.

There are things people can do to improve how they feel physically and emotionally:

-  A sleep routine makes it easier to manage emotions. Enjoy unsweetened herbal or ginger tea instead of kahwah, black tea or green tea in the evenings to help with sleep.
-  Drinking tea with just spices and nuts can be a comforting way of staying connected to your heritage while in the U.S.
-  Drinking eight glasses of water every day helps people's bodies and brain function properly.
-  Move your body every day for at least 15 minutes. This includes walks with your family, stretching, or Attan dancing.
-  Breathing slowly and deeply is one of the best ways to lower stress and it doesn't take much time.
-  Play games that are popular in Afghanistan, like chess.
-  Continue the Afghan tradition of eating healthy home-cooked meals at home, together with family.
-  Connect with other Afghans in your neighborhood or who attend your mosque. Consider hosting gatherings with your new friends.



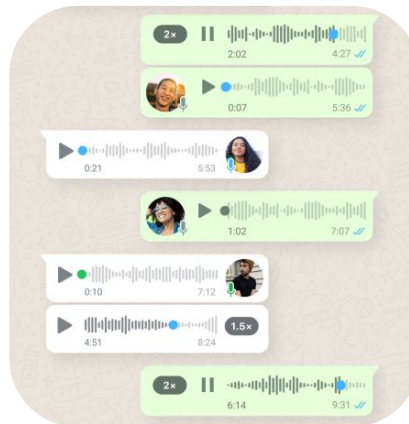
>> What is a “Collection” ?



Fact Sheets



Social Media



Audio recordings +
text templates

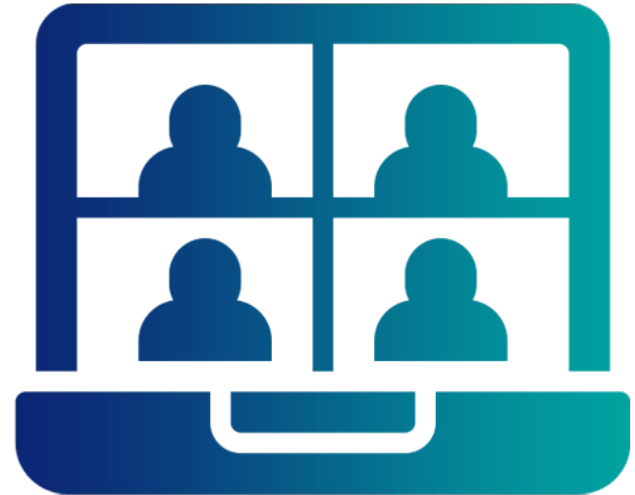


Video

>> Learn from Communities

Content Advisors

- Achieved through listening sessions, community advisory boards, etc.
- Incorporate community perspectives
- Informs topics, framing, media, dissemination



» Incorporating Community Perspectives

Key messages:

- Context of Afghans' displacement
- Connection to faith and traditions
- Positive memories from home country

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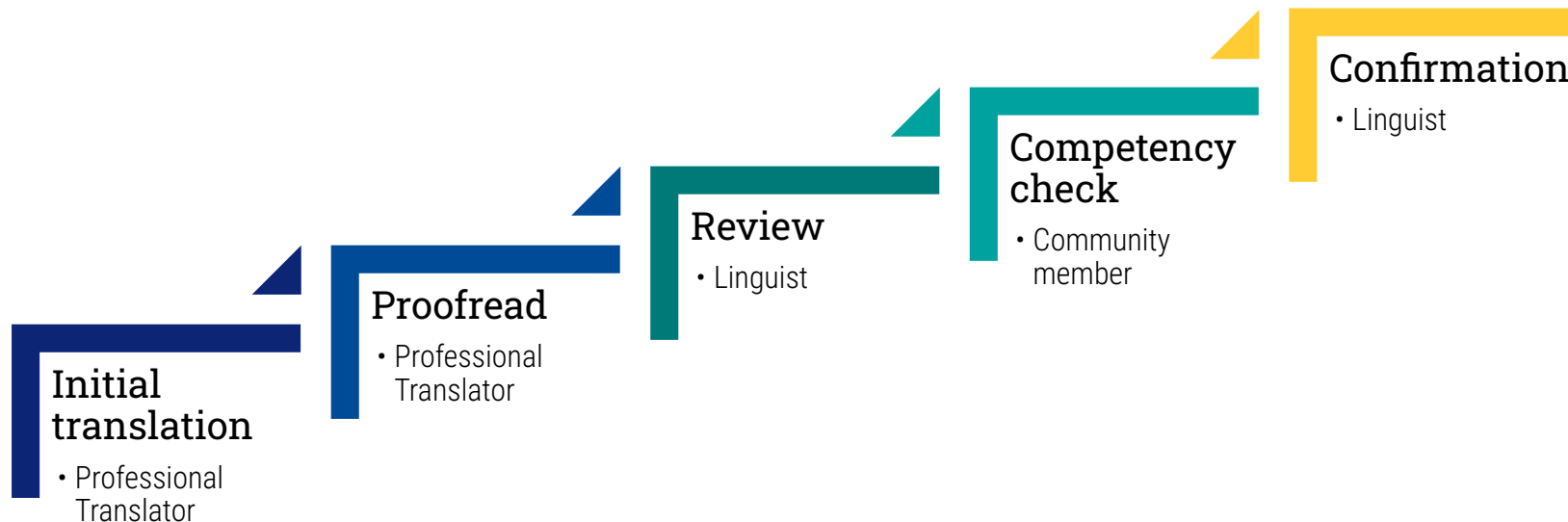
>> Incorporating Community Perspectives

Key messages:

- Attan dancing
- Kahwah
- Chess
- Kite flying



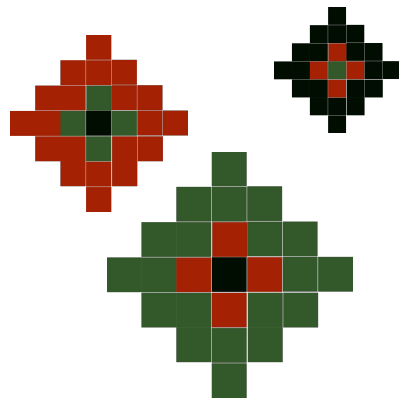
>> Robust Translation & Cultural Validation



>> Extended Cultural Validation



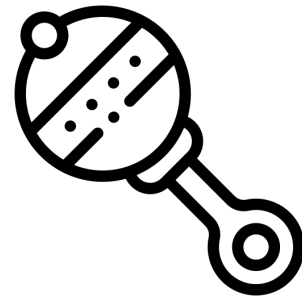
Photos



Brand



Messages



Symbols

» Honoring Oral Traditions

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-  Connect with neighbors or people who attend mosque or who host gatherings with new friends.

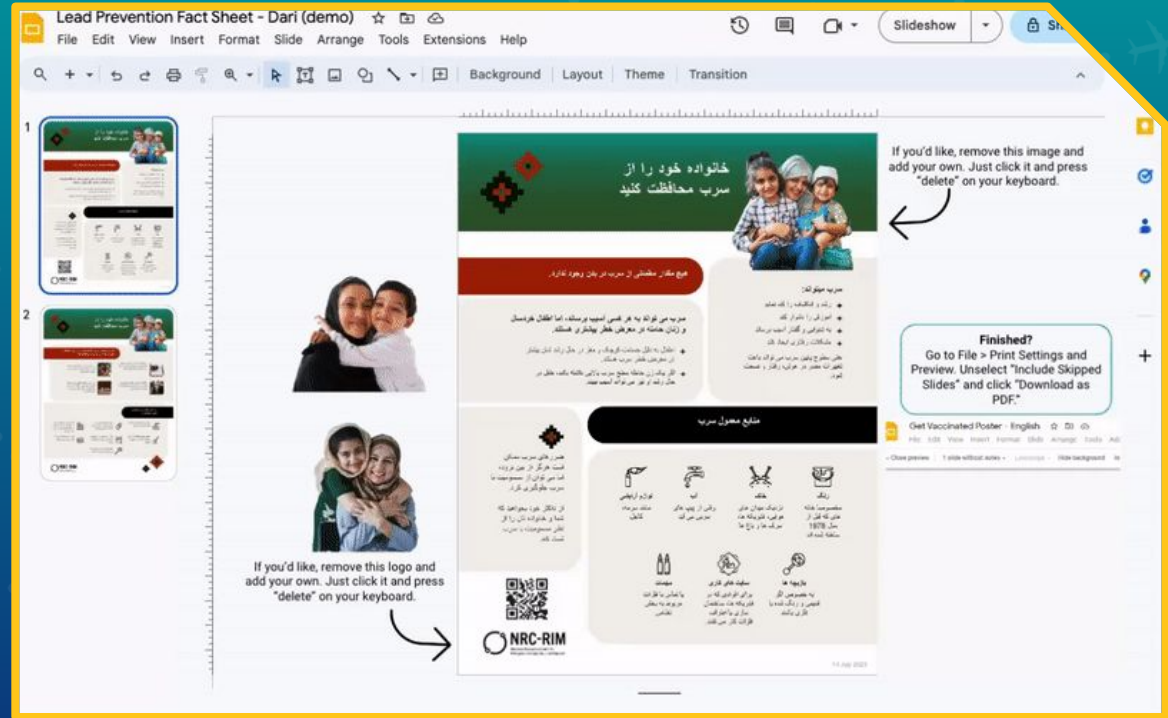




Customizable Templates



Google Slides





»» Mental Health Toolkit

» Practical Tools



**Conversation
Guide**



**Video: Emotional
Wellbeing Post
Resettlement**

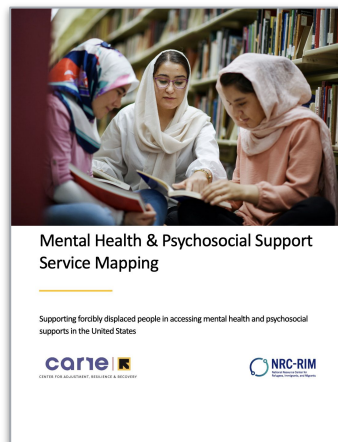


**Phone
Resources**

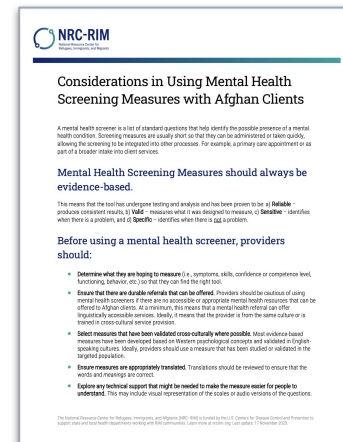
Checklists and Guides



Facilitating Discussions About Mental Health With Afghan Newcomer Communities



Mental Health Service Mapping for Afghan Newcomers





Considerations in Using Mental Health Screening Measures with Afghan Clients

» Making a Mental Health Referral

- Medical History
- Casualty and Worldview
- Familiarity
- History of Psychiatric Abuse
- Language
- Confidentiality
- Context

>> Professional Development

PSYCHOLOGICAL
FIRST AID (PFA)
ONLINE



✓ OFFERING 5 CE'S

NCTSN The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network
LEARNING CENTER

SKILLS FOR
PSYCHOLOGICAL
RECOVERY (SPR)



✓ OFFERING 5 CE'S

NCTSN The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network
LEARNING CENTER

SUICIDE PREVENTION IN
RESETTLEMENT, ASYLUM
AND INTEGRATION
SETTINGS



INTERNATIONAL
RESCUE
COMMITTEE

>> Promising Practices

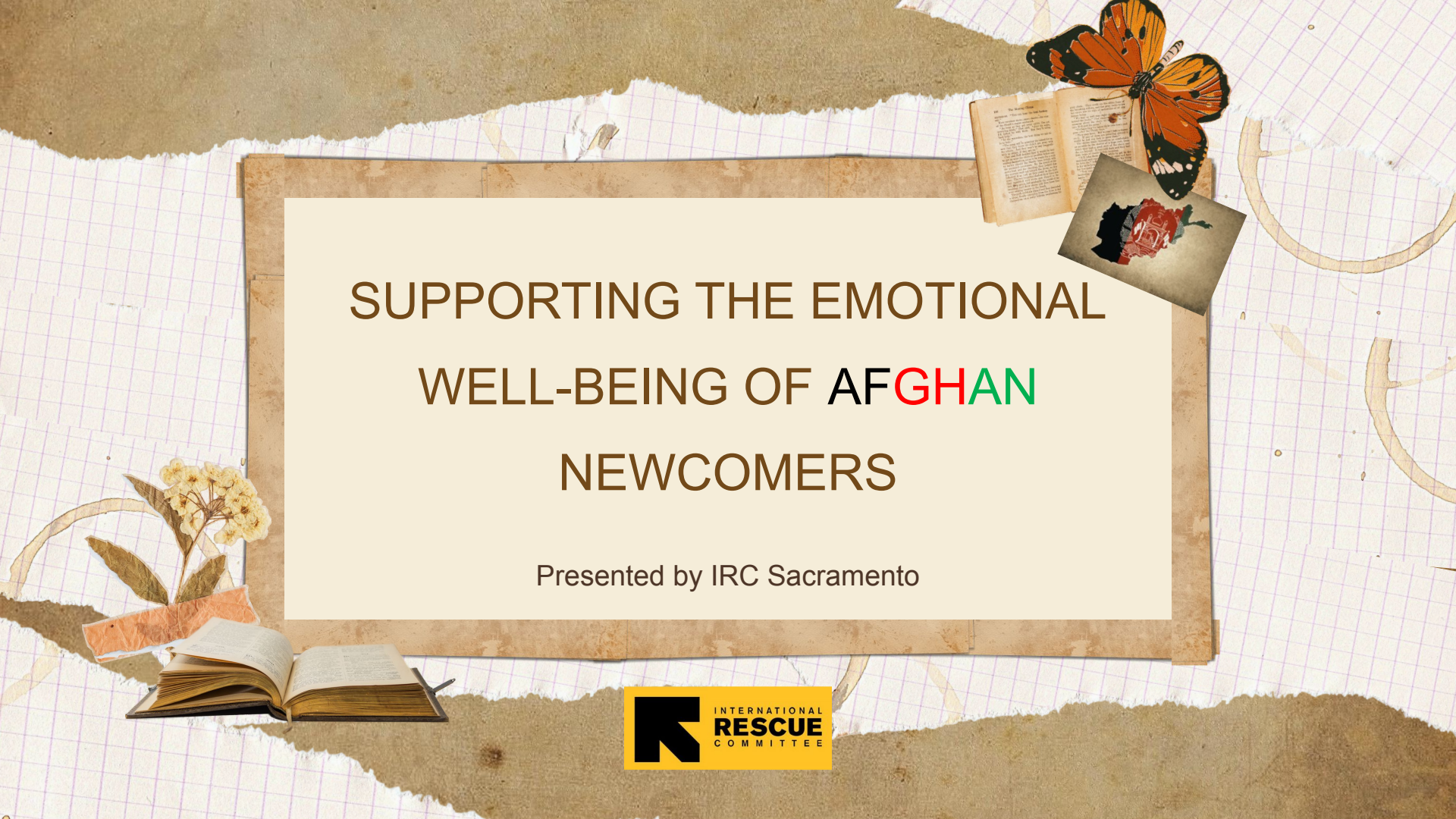
**Mental Health and Social Support
Programming for Afghan Newcomers**

**Supporting Mental Health in RIM
Communities During COVID-19
and Beyond**





» Example: IRC Sacramento



SUPPORTING THE EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF AFGHAN NEWCOMERS

Presented by IRC Sacramento





NRC-RIM PROGECT

**Afghan Adjustment
Support Groups**

Wellness Workshops

**Skills
for Psychological Recovery
(Wellness Coaching)**

Health and Wellness Outreach





Afghan Adjustment Support Groups

- v Weekly sessions designed to provide connection and support to newcomers surrounding issues related to emotional distress and well-being utilizing the Pathways To Wellness curriculum.
- v Example topics include but are not limited to the following: Culture Shock, Refugee Experience, Mental Health, Coping Skills, Mind and Body Connection, and Goals and Dreams and creating wellness.

Pathways to Wellness Adjustment

- Stigma
- Culture & Language
- Level of literacy and education
- Age and gender of the participants
- The level of attention and interest of the participants





VISION BOARD GOALS



Vision boards serve as a continual reminder of one's priorities. Clarifying one's desires through this visual tool, it aids in enhancing self-awareness, thereby allowing our clients to gain a deeper understanding of themselves. This visual reminder facilitates the manifestation of desired objectives through proactive steps towards their attainment.





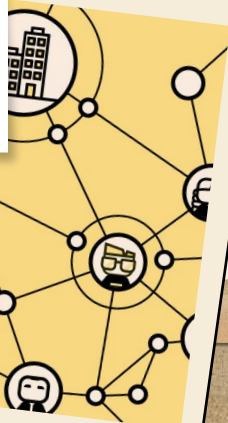
UC DAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

WELLNESS WORKSHOPS

- Weekly workshops connecting community members to resources in the Sacramento community
- Example topics include but are not limited to the following: Meditation, Winter Storm Safety, Dental Health Insurance, Child & Adult Education, Water Safety, Car Seat Safety, and Drug Prevention



Omni
YOUTH
programs



SKILLS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL RECOVERY (WELLNESS COACHING)



Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) helps ease adjustment and impacts of trauma for clients, through building problem-solving skills, promoting positive activities and helpful thinking, and building healthy social connections. SPR is conducted through one-on-one sessions with our Community Wellness Specialists.

he moment you believe that
better at your decision
en you'll become
to learn



THANK YOU



Questions
