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## The impact of empathic interventions when confronting armed conflict and displacement of children and adolescents: The humanitarian response



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The priority in any international crisis when working as a humanitarian psychologist is to promote an atmosphere of safety and trust in the most insecure of environments. This requires both a solid clinical background and therapeutic framework to handle the unforeseen as they arise. Exposure to mental health risk are a reality for young girls and boys who have been dealt a harsh blow to their daily lives due to war and or impact of being displaced and separated from their families. Although not all children who face such difficult contexts require mental health care, resiliency can also have a short leash to the realities that they may face if not given appropriate emotional or community support. The overall high risks which come with family separation in war context, often can lead to children being vulnerable to adult predators to manipulate the child or adolescent to engage in unsafe and emotionally unhealthy behaviors. Although resiliency does occur with each individual child differently, this type of exposure can always have predicting effects to the seed of the child's future emotional wellness. Humanitarian institutions working in such difficult emergency context often are not prepared or trained to support the emotional wellness for a vulnerable child and youth whom experience such abuse. The lack of the training on empathic intervention response is a missing variable for humanitarian institutions working with children and adolescents in dire need. Therefore, the importance for the hiring a trained psychologist within these organizations is crucial if managers and the field workers want to seriously reflect and actively address the psychosocial and mental health challenges in the field.

### **Biography**

Khaleel Isa is a licensed Clinical Psychologist and a Child and Adolescent Trauma Specialist. He has served communities with vulnerable children, adolescents, and adults in urban conflict and/or refugee/IDP war torn settings since completing his Post-doctoral Fellowship in 2003. His technical insight and clinical principals come from over a decade of experience in the art of psychotherapy, designing programs and training staff for effective relief outcomes in USA, Africa and Middle East. He worked recently as a MHPSS Consultant Expert Strategist in Somalia-wide IOM GBV and health programs in the spring of 2018. He has years of experience as a Mental Health Coordinator in both Turkey and Palestine for International NGOs, have led him to develop expertise on the Mental Health and the impact of war, displacement and risks for exploitation on children and adolescents.

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