

Effects of Chronic Trauma on Internally Displaced Persons

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GCRT – Who we are

- ❑ Founded in 2000 – head office Tbilisi regional offices Gori, Batumi, Kutaisi
 - ❑ Multidisciplinary team – psychiatrists, psychologists, medical doctors, social workers, lawyers
 - ❑ providing assistance to traumatized individuals and communities – internally displaced persons, refugees from Chechnya, persons tortured by the law enforcement bodies
 - ❑ Work conducted in the center and through community outreach
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IDP Traumas

- Massive – entire communities affected
 - Multiple – war, displacement,
 - Chronic – permanent victimhood
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Dimensions of Damage After Trauma

- ❑ Intrapsychic (including personality changes)
 - ❑ Family (closeness, intimacy, balance)
 - ❑ Transgenerational/Historical
 - ❑ Social (injustice, isolation, secondary victimisation)
 - ❑ Physical
 - ❑ Economic
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Intrapsychic Dimension

- ❑ Trauma related disorders - PTSD, Depression, Anxiety Disorders, Somatoform Disorders, etc.
 - ❑ Alterations in self perceptions (identity crisis, loosing dignity, fragmentation)
 - ❑ Profound feelings of shame and guilt
 - ❑ Shattering of basic assumptions (Personal invulnerability, view of oneself in positive light, being worthy & good, belief in a meaningful, orderly world)
 - ❑ Alterations in relations with others
 - ❑ Somatic and psychosomatic diseases
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Familial Dimension

- ❑ formation of new family structures; re-distribution of roles within families
 - ❑ Fragmentation within the families
 - ❑ Domestic violence
 - ❑ Violence towards children
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Socio-Economic Dimension

- Victimized Communities
 - Passivity/Dependency
 - Fear/Mistrust/hostility
 - Alienation, marginalization
 - Sense of Worthlessness
 - Poverty
 - Unemployment
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Historical

- ❑ Past and current traumas
 - ❑ Idealization of the past
 - ❑ New post trauma narratives – victimhood
 - ❑ Disrupted Timeline - before and after the war
 - ❑ Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma
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Trauma can lead to

- Post traumatic damage with severe implications that may result in disorders, developmental arrest core belief change

or

- Post traumatic growth – personal development, positive personality transformation, appreciation of life, value based lifestyle, resource activation.
Paradox: “I am vulnerable yet stronger”
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Self-Healing/Resilience

- People have the capacity to heal themselves – these capacities should not be underestimated
 - Resilience – The ability to bounce back and successfully adapt to adversity and be better prepared
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A delicate balance:

Personal / socio-political
Private / public
Pain / resiliency

(Bala, 2004)



Final Remarks

- Trauma is a complex phenomenon involving individual, communal, societal, legal, economic, political, historical dimensions
 - trauma should be put in the broader context of mental health, public health, human rights and justice
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Thank you for your attention