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
IDP Traumas

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

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

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

- Victimized Communities
- Passivity/Dependency
- Fear/Mistrust/hostility
- Alienation, marginalization
- Sense of Worthlessness
- Poverty
- Unemployment
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
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”
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
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
Thank you for your attention