



# Master of Public Health

Master de Santé Publique

## Exploring the lived experiences of Syrians coping with displacement-related stress and trauma

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**Class and year of the Master:** 2017-2019

**Location of the practicum:** Istanbul, Turkey

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# Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone involved in this study, especially the study participants, who gave their precious time to share with me their experiences and perceptions.

## **Academic support**

I would like to thank my supervisors: Prof. Nilüfer Narlı and Prof. Odessa Petit Dit Dariel who shared their knowledge and time with me and provided enormous encouragement. Prof. Nilüfer helped me choose the research topic among many ideas I had in mind. After deciding the research idea, we met to discuss the study design and analysis.

Prof. Nilüfer gave me a lot of valuable advice on the qualitative methodology (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis). Prof. Odessa helped me develop the interview guide, conduct successful interviews, right a research and do the qualitative analysis appropriately.

Both Prof. Nilüfer and Prof. Odessa read and commented on my drafts step by step all the way through the thesis.

## **Other support**

I would like to thank my family members for supporting me all the way. Also, I am highly grateful to my supportive friends.

I would like also to thank the (Open Society Foundations) and specifically the (Civil Society Leadership Award) scholarship program for making this dream happen.

I would like to acknowledge all my fellow students support through this journey.

Thank you.

# Contents

Acknowledgments .....	1
List of tables .....	3
Abbreviations .....	4
Abstract .....	5
Résumé .....	6
Introduction .....	7
Overall context .....	7
Defining/clarifying the target population .....	8
Project topic.....	9
Methodology .....	9
Study design.....	9
Sampling .....	10
Inclusion criteria:.....	10
Non-inclusion criteria: .....	10
Data collection.....	11
Data analysis:.....	12
Results and Discussion.....	13
Overview .....	13
Socio-demographics of the sample .....	13
Syrian refugees' responses to migration .....	15
Theme 1: War-related loss and trauma .....	16
Theme 2: Environmental migration-related stressors and future instability .....	19
Theme 3: Constructive coping mechanisms .....	22
Theme 4: Un-constructive coping mechanisms.....	25
Theme 5: Not accepting mental health services.....	25
Limitations .....	27
Recommendations .....	28
References.....	29
Appendices .....	34
Appendix 1: Informed Consent Form .....	34
Appendix 2: Arabic Informed Consent Form .....	36

Appendix 3: Interview Guide .....	38
Appendix 4: Arabic Interview Guide .....	40
Appendix 5: Codebook .....	43
Appendix 6: An Example of Phase 1 of the Analysis .....	45
Appendix 7: An Example of Phase 2 of the Analysis .....	45
Appendix 8: Table showing presence of themes across cases.....	46
Appendix 9: Translated Quotes .....	47

## List of tables

Table 1: study participants and their main descriptions.....	14
Table 2: Master themes and sub themes.....	15

# Abbreviations

**IPA:** Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

**NGO:** Non-Governmental Organization

**TPR:** Temporary Protection Regulations

**GOS:** Government of Syria

**TR:** Turkey

**PTSD:** Post traumatic stress disorder

# Abstract

## **Exploring the lived experiences of Syrians coping with displacement-related stress and trauma**

### **Objectives**

The objective of this study was to explore how Syrian refugees in Turkey perceive and manage their experiences of displacement and how they cope with war and displacement-related stressors. A secondary objective was to explore their perceptions of mental health and their attitudes towards seeking mental health services.

### **Methodology**

This study used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to guide the interviews and analysis. Six in-depth interviews were conducted with Syrian refugees living in Gaziantep city in Turkey. The recorded transcripts were fully transcribed and analyzed according to IPA principles.

### **Results**

Five Major themes emerged from the data: war-related loss and trauma, environmental migration-related stressors and future instability, constructive stress-coping strategies (mainly social networks, community and religion), un-constructive stress-coping strategies (mostly smoking) and refusing mental health services.

### **Conclusion**

The findings from this study can contribute to the design of psychological support programs for refugees that build on existing stress-coping strategies. The study recommends mental health professionals to understand the perceptions of their patients regarding mental well-being.

### **Keywords**

(IPA, refugees, stressors, coping, mental health, qualitative)

# Résumé

## **Etude des expériences de Syriens faisant face au stress lié au déplacement.**

### **Objectifs**

L'objectif principal de cette étude est d'étudier la façon dont les réfugiés syriens en Turquie perçoivent et gèrent leur expérience du déplacement et la façon dont ils font face aux facteurs de stress liés à la guerre et au déplacement. L'objectif secondaire est d'explorer leur perception de la santé mentale et leurs attitudes face à la demande de services en santé mentale.

### **Méthode**

Cette recherche s'est appuyée sur la méthode d'analyse interprétative phénoménologique (AIP) dans la conduite des interviews et de leur analyse. Six interviews détaillés ont été menés avec des réfugiés syriens vivant dans la ville de Gaziantep en Turquie. Leurs enregistrements ont été complètement transcrits et analysés suivant les principes de l'AIP.

### **Résultats**

Cinq thèmes centraux ont émergé de ces données : (1) perte et trauma liés à la guerre ; (2) facteurs de stress liés au contexte migratoire et à un future incertain ; (3) stratégies constructives d'adaptation au stress (e.g. relations sociales, communauté, religion) ; (4) stratégies non-constructives d'adaptation au stress (e.g. fumer) ; (5) refus de services de santé mentale.

### **Conclusion**

Les résultats de cette étude peuvent contribuer à la création de programmes de soutien psychologique pour les réfugiés qui s'appuient sur les stratégies d'adaptation au stress existantes. L'étude recommande aux professionnels de santé mentale de comprendre la perception que leurs patients ont du bien être mental.

### **Mots clés**

(AIP, Réfugiés, facteurs de stress, santé mentale, qualitative)

# Introduction

## Overall context

From the start of the Syrian revolution in March 2011, there were incidences of extreme violence against peaceful protestors (Kirişci, 2014). The Syrian government responded to Syrian protestors with arrests, torture and killing (Human Rights Watch, 2012). Thus, while the revolution did not turn into a civil war until 2012, Syrian migration to Turkey began as early as April 2011 (Kirişci, 2014; Narli, 2018). Over the following years, large numbers of Syrian refugees crossed over Turkish borders fleeing violence and massacres (Kirişci, 2014). The number of Syrian refugees in Turkey had reached one million in 2014 and three million by the end of 2017 (UNHCR, 2019).

All civil wars and ensuing migrations are stressful to the people living through them (Woltin, Sassenberg, & Albayrak, 2018). The particular brutality of the Syrian civil war led to many Syrians being forced to witness horrifying events such as the murder, rape and torture of loved ones and the mass genocide of compatriots (Davis & Wanninger, 2017; Hassan, Ventevogel, Jefee-Bahloul, Barkil-Oteo, & Kirmayer, 2016). Moreover, repeated displacements due to airstrikes led many to lose their families, abandon previous careers or education and suffer through challenging journeys to seek safety (SAMS, 2015; Hassan et al., 2016). Finally, many displaced Syrians were faced with difficult living conditions in the countries to which they migrated (Hassan et al., 2016).

The violence and displacement caused by revolutions and civil wars such as what occurred in Syria have been shown to contribute to a number of mental disorders (Davis & Wanninger, 2017; Hassan et al., 2016) for which there are currently few existing healthcare solutions on offer. Having appropriate coping mechanisms is an essential tool for such populations to handle these psychological stressors. Exploring migration-related stressors among Syrians in Turkey and understanding their experiences and how they have coped thus far could help develop future interventions. Yet data on displacement-related stressors, coping strategies and the stigma associated with mental issues is scarce. Specific research on Syrian refugees is even scarcer, especially qualitative data. The majority of studies focusing on the mental health of Syrian refugees have been quantitative (Alpak et al., 2015; Rogers-Sirin & Şirin, 2015; Woltin et al., 2018).



Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) has been used with other refugees to explore such psychosocial issues (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010; Hussain & Bhushan, 2011; Hussain & Bhushan, 2013). Rosbrook & Schweitzer explored the meaning of home and the experience of the loss of home among the Karen and Chin refugees who were forcibly displaced out of Burma (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010). Such a qualitative approach could provide deeper understanding of how Syrian refugees have been coping with their experiences and could contribute to improving programs, policies and practices involved in improving mental well-being among this population.

## Defining/clarifying the target population

According to the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR, the latest number of forcibly displaced people is 68.5 million worldwide (UNHCR, 2018b). Among them 40 million are considered internally displaced, 3.1 million are asylum seekers and 25.4 million are refugees (UNHCR, 2018b). According to the UNHCR, "A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group." (UNHCR, 2018a). An asylum seeker is a person who has fled his or her country due to war, violence or fear of persecution and is seeking refuge in another country. An asylum seeker is applying for asylum – the right to be recognized as a refugee - (UNHCR, 2018a). The difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker is that the asylum seeker is still in the process of becoming a refugee (UNHCR, 2018a). Internally displaced people (IDPs) have had to flee their homes but were displaced within their home country, rather than to a different country. Unlike refugees, IDPs are not protected by international law (UNHCR, 2018a).

The biggest number of refugees in the world currently comes from Syria (UNHCR, 2018a). There are 5.5 million Syrian refugees in the world (UNHCR, 2019). The country hosting the largest number of Syrian refugees is Turkey (UNHCR, 2018b). It is hosting more than 3.6 million Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2019). This number only includes registered Syrian refugees whose stay is regulated under the Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR). The Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) issued the Law on Foreigners and International Protection in 2013 then the "Temporary Protection Regulation" in 2014 (Rygiel, Baban, & Ilcan, 2016). Both regulations give Syrians who fled to Turkey the right to apply for temporary protection but not for refugee status (Davis & Wanninger, 2017; İçduygu et al., 2016; Narli,

2018; Smeekes et al., 2017). Temporary protection provides Syrians who have crossed the Turkish border basic provisions and rights, such as the right to stay in Turkey for an unlimited period of time (Akar & Erdoğan, 2018). Besides the 3.6 million registered Syrian refugees in Turkey, there is a big number of Syrians who have resident permits but are not registered as refugees (Kirişçi, 2014; Narli, 2018). Moreover, in 2017, there was an estimated 400,000 unregistered Syrians without any legal papers in Turkey (ICG, 2018).

## Project topic

The objective of this study is to explore how adult Syrian refugees (18 to 55) in Turkey are coping with displacement-related stress and trauma and how they have tackled potential mental issues.

### **Main Objective and research questions**

The study will explore four main topics:

1. Displacement and migration related stressors.
2. Coping strategies to deal with these stressors.
3. Knowledge and perspectives on mental illness.
4. Attitudes towards seeking out mental health services.

## Methodology

### Study design

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was considered an appropriate methodology because it aims to explore in detail how participants perceive their particular experiences and gives justice to the totality of the individuals (Smith & Osborn, 2008). IPA attempts to understand the personal experiences of individuals and their points of view (Smith & Osborn, 2008). There have been few studies using qualitative methods to understand coping among refugees, especially the cultural impact on coping (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011). A qualitative method such as IPA can help better understand how participants interpret their experiences without priori assumptions from the researcher (Hussain & Bhushan, 2011).

Data was collected through in-depth interviews to capture rich and detailed descriptions of how Syrian refugees in Turkey are experiencing and making sense of their displacement-related stressors and to uncover their coping mechanisms. The topics were generated based on consultations with experts and my own personal experiences as a displaced Syrian having been forced to flee to Turkey. I consulted primarily with professor Nilüfer Narlı -Director of The Center for Health, Society and Prevention Studies (CHSPS) at Bahçeşehir University- who has previously conducted research on Syrian refugees in Turkey.

## Sampling

The study used purposeful sampling combined with quota sampling to identify eligible participants. I used the following inclusion and non-inclusion criteria to select participants.

### Inclusion criteria:

- Syrian nationals who had fled Syria due to the Syrian conflict
- Syrian nationals living in Turkey between one and three years (to avoid memory bias).
- Syrian nationals older than 18 years old and younger than 55 years old (issues of stress-coping and mental health are challenging to investigate in children and elderly populations. Children and the elderly, especially in the Syrian context, do not have autonomy and are surrounded by a complex social network that impacts their stress-coping and help seeking behavior. This research aims to reach those individuals who have had to face their challenges of adapting to their circumstances more independently, unmediated as much as possible by other family members on which they depend.)
- Both male and female Syrian nationals. (In Syrian culture there are differences in terms of expectations related to responsibilities and support methods between men and women.)
- Syrians who are living under temporary protection regulation TPR (TPR participants are more vulnerable than Syrians with residence permits because they came to Turkey illegally).

### Non-inclusion criteria:

- Syrians nationals who moved to Turkey before the Syrian conflict.
- Syrian nationals younger than 18 years old or older than 55 years old.
- Syrian nationals using psychiatric services or on psychiatric medications (because the study aims to explore personal, non-pharmaceutical coping mechanisms, not those who have already sought professional help).
- Syrians who have residence permits and did not apply for TPR. (It is valuable to explore

the stressors and stress-coping mechanisms for all Syrians regardless of their legal papers. However, for the timeframe of this exploratory study the focus was only on the most vulnerable Syrians who are living under TPR).

## Data collection

After consulting Prof. Nilüfer Narlı, Gaziantep was chosen as the primary location for data collection. Most Syrians who have moved to Turkey are living in cities on the Syrian-Turkish border (Kirişci, 2014). Gaziantep is the first stop for most Syrians due to its location, cultural and historical ties with their homeland and is known for its industrial importance (Gültekin, 2018; Turgut, 2015).

Before the interviews began I consulted with three Syrian mental health professionals who informed me of existing mental health and psychological services available in the city. They helped with recruitment by identifying relevant Syrian participants fitting the inclusion criteria. The informants also provided advice and guidance on the development of the interview guide, helping me choose appropriate wording since there is a stigma associated with the topic of mental illness (Hassan et al., 2016). Since the interview questions touched on a sensitive topic, the key informants also prepared me with basic “psychological first aid” and I had a protocol to follow in case any symptoms of distress were observed during the interviews. An ethical committee at Hasan Kalyoncu University in Gaziantep reviewed and approved the study design. This approval was provided verbally but a formal, written ethical approval has not yet been received.

Before conducting any interviews with refugees, I pilot tested the interview guide (appendix 3) with three people. The questions were designed to cover four main topics: migration-related stressors, stress-coping, perceptions of mental health and attitudes towards its services. Answers to questions were further explored through probes and follow-up questions, and at the end of each interview, participants were asked if they had any other comments to add that they considered relevant.

All the interviews were conducted in Arabic and took place in a location where the participants felt most comfortable. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The participants were provided information about the study and were ensured confidentiality and of their right to withdraw at any time. A written informed consent (Appendix 1) was signed by all the participants. I offered the participants a dessert and/or a drink as a gesture to thank them for their time in participating in the study.

Even though data collection was mainly based on narratives of the participants' experiences, observational data was also collected for contextual precision.

## Data analysis:

All the data was analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Data analysis using IPA is similar to other qualitative analytical methods. It starts by looking for themes (Smith & Osborn, 2008) and then connects these themes with the analysis of other cases before writing up the results (Smith & Osborn, 2008). I followed the steps outlined by Smith & Osborn, familiarizing myself with the data by transcribing it, reading it, re-reading it, taking notes and summarizing it.

From the categories that emerged codes were identified and a codebook was created (Appendix 6). Then, all the transcripts were coded. After reading and re-reading the transcripts many themes emerged and were categorized. Master themes and sub themes were summarized with illustrative verbatim from participants and organized into tables (Appendix 7). This process was performed using Microsoft office Word and Excel. Themes were created by examining codes and linking relevant ones together. Most of the sub codes were combined into broader themes. I discarded several sub codes when the data supporting them was insufficient. I also listed the themes according to each participant (Appendix 8) to capture how participants made sense of their experiences. I attempted to 'treat each case on its own' in order to adhere to the idiographic, inductive approach necessary for good-quality IPA (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Following the analysis of the transcripts case by case, I tried to find similarities and disparities across all cases. I was always revisiting individual transcripts to determine whether my interpretations and grouping of themes 'made sense' in terms of how participants had given voice to their lived experiences, and were revised accordingly. After analyzing the data, the chosen quotes were translated from Arabic to English. The final themes are completely data-driven and are based on how the participants interpreted their experiences. The purpose was to provide a detailed description and analysis of the participants' experiences and perceptions without any preconceptions.

# Results and Discussion

## Overview

This chapter presents the findings that came from the analytic process described in the previous chapter. In the first section I describe the population having participated in the study and follow with the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the interviews.

## Socio-demographics of the sample

There were a number of difficulties in recruiting participants. Several Syrian refugees refused to participate because they felt “psychologically tired” or were not “talkative” and thus did not feel like talking to anyone. Others worked long hours or were mothers with babies and did not have time to participate in a study. Another source of difficulty related to the inclusion/non-inclusion criteria. Most of the Syrians I contacted had been living in Turkey for more than four years and others were living in Turkey with a residence permit rather than temporary protection permits. One participant was identified through a personal connection and another was recommended by one of the three key informants. Each participant was contacted twice before it was considered a refusal. In total, ten people were contacted, six interviewees consented to participate, four refused to take part.

The sample was geographically homogeneous. All the participants were living in Gaziantep city on the Syrian Turkish border. However, quota sampling ensured that the participants had come from different locations in Syria and had had different socioeconomic backgrounds. The characteristics of the six participants are illustrated in table 1. There was an equal number of men and women and their educational levels varied: two had high school degrees, one had a master degree and three had bachelor degrees. Even though the majority of Syrians in Gaziantep come from Aleppo (Gültekin, 2018), the participants were from different regions in Syria: Three had come from Eastern Ghouta (two come from Douma and one from Harasta); one from Hama, one from rural Aleppo and the last one had come from Raqqa. All the interviewees had come to Turkey illegally and all of them mentioned difficulties in their journeys, although three of them had very difficult journeys.

Table 1: study participants and their main descriptions

SN	Gender	Education	Occupation	Time spent in TR	Marital Status	Age	Reason of moving
1	Male	BA Economics	Accountant	1 year	Single	24	Was requested for the Syrian Army
2	Male	High school	Baker	3 years	Married	30	War-related violence
3	Female	BA Civil Engineering	Housewife	2.5 years	Married	26	Persecution of husband
4	Female	Islamic Studies	Aid worker	3 years	Married	27	Persecution of husband
5	Female	Master of Clinical Biochemistry	Activist	1 year	Single	35	War-related violence
6	Male	High school	Aid worker	2 years	Engaged	26	War-related violence

Some of the respondents' stressors were related to the way they had left Syria, their reasons for leaving and their losses due to the war. Other stressors were related to living in Turkey, such as the language barrier, future instability, job-related stressors, social acceptance, legal restrictions on refugees, the big change they went through and worrying about their parents in the new country.

## Syrian refugees' responses to migration

The following section constitutes my interpretation of the participants' own accounts of their experiences relating to migration-related stressors, stress-coping, perceptions of mental health and attitudes towards its services. Five themes were generated through this analytic process: War-related loss and trauma; Environmental migration-related stressors; Constructive coping mechanisms; Non-constructive coping mechanisms; and Not accepting mental health services. These themes and their sub themes are presented in Table 2. A narrative account of the results, incorporating textual examples are then provided.

Table 2: Master themes and sub themes

<b>Master themes</b>	<b>Sub themes</b>
War-related loss and trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of home and belonging</li> <li>- Separation of family and friends</li> <li>- Haunting trauma memories</li> </ul>
Environmental migration-related stressors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Legal Restrictions on Refugees</li> <li>- Job insecurity</li> <li>- Difficulties in social acceptance</li> </ul>
Constructive coping mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family and friends support</li> <li>- Religion</li> <li>- Entertaining activities</li> </ul>
Non-constructive coping mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Smoking</li> <li>- Staying alone</li> </ul>
Not accepting mental health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Doesn't like sharing personal issues</li> <li>- Can be psychologist of himself/herself</li> <li>- Lack of trust in mental health professionals</li> <li>- Stigma related to mental health services</li> </ul>



## Theme 1: War-related loss and trauma

All the respondents expressed the magnitude of suffering caused by the loss of loved ones through violent circumstances, the protracted separation from friends and family members, and making sense of the loss of home, livelihood and belonging. These past events caused many participants to experience frequent memory flashbacks both of good living conditions that were lost and of traumatizing events lived. The participants expressed having to deal with the daily psychological impacts caused by war-related loss and trauma which has continued to haunt them in their new host country.

Three sub themes, outlined below, were identified as part of this main theme: Loss of home and belonging, Separation of family members and friends, and Haunting trauma memories.

### 1.1 Sub theme: Loss of home, hope and belonging

For one participant a desire to return to Syria is a continuous daily stressor. His voice and tone were nostalgic as he discussed his dream of returning home while simultaneously recognizing a loss of hope that conditions may never improve in Syria enough to be able to go back, making him feel desperate:

*“Every second I think what should I take with me if I went back? Yes maybe I am thinking like this to satisfy myself... if things settled down and services became available I swear I wouldn’t think for five minutes, I would immediately go back.”* Male 30 years old

Similarly, another participant who did not feel she belonged in Turkey also yearned to return to Syria: *“This place (Turkey) isn’t my place I don’t feel I belong I feel the atmosphere is rejecting me we got out (from Syria) so late”* Female 35 years old

These two comments demonstrate how displacement affects a sense of identity and belonging. Distress due to loss of home was also explored using IPA in a study on refugees from Burma (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010). Their results highlight the psychological relief and life satisfaction attached to the concept of “home” for refugees (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010). A reaction to this loss and grief leads to a devaluing of the host country, as well as acculturation difficulties. The participants who had personally witnessed the death of loved ones and experienced severe violence in Syria still refused the idea of settling in Turkey. The emotional attachment to their home country might be due to their forced migration and an absence of choice in the matter (Akhtar, 1995). Moreover, these participants may also have had many

years of adult life spent in their home country and memories of their life prior to the war. They had established strong social networks and stable careers that they had to abandon. This makes acculturation in a new country more difficult for them, thus contributing to a stronger sense of culture shock (Akhtar, 1995). Refugees who have experienced livelihood losses in terms of assets or networks also find it more difficult to establish their livelihoods in a new host country (Jacobsen, 2014). Thus starting from zero socially and professionally might be harder for older refugees.

For slightly younger participants, on the other hand, Syria no longer felt like 'home' and they did not want to go back, especially after all the suffering they had been through. This participant felt the country was no longer his and the people were no longer the same:

*"Today, I vent my feelings with my friend since the same thing is happening to him. We were talking about if things calm down in Syria that we will not go back. I lost the feeling of belonging to Syria I swear to God I will not go back no matter what happens because the country is no longer our country and the people are no longer our people. It makes me upset what happened to us, we had a certain goal and we achieved something different and all the people that died for what? For this to happen! No!" Male 26 years old*

## 1.2. Sub theme: Separation of family members and friends

Without exception all participants recounted experiencing protracted separation from close family members and friends. Some refugees had even experienced the violent deaths of family members and friends, which inevitably had a significant impact on their psychological well-being. Other refugees had lost contact with their friends and family due to distances and having immigrated to different countries:

*"They died in this war so many so many so many died I am talking about close friends we were living together... they all died in abnormal conditions; strikes, bullets or was on the side of a fighting party and got killed. Many scenarios but I lost them. Those of them who remained migrated to Europe...they travelled." Male 30 years old*

The participant's language attests to his experience as a powerless observer of the violent death of his close friends. He repeated words like "many" to express the overwhelming magnitude of death. His voice trailed off indicating how impacted he felt by this loss.

The following participant had been forced to leave Syria due to her husband's persecution and was obliged to leave her parents who had remained in Syria.

*“My suffering is that I want to see my parents no matter, wherever I can see them. I cannot because if I leave Turkey I cannot go back to it again and for my parents it is not that easy for them to get inside Turkey...uuh that is the story”* Female 27 years old

Forced separation from family members was not the only family-related stressor. Half of the respondents had their parents with them in Turkey and mentioned being worried about their elderly parents adapting to the host country. They felt a sense of guilt and suffering because they had brought their parents to this new challenging country.

*“I am feeling guilty that I got them out (of Syria) my father is 73 years old and my mum is 64 years old they really didn't have to endure all this suffering due to my choice... of course they are not feeling comfortable because they were forced out of their social network and out of their properties. Us and the children we are flexible we cope we find a new social network but the old ones no they have practically isolated themselves completely.”* Female 35 years old

The respondents expressed sadness due to what their parents were going through. Their elderly parents' migration stressors had become their own. Knowing that their parents felt isolated made them feel guilty about having contributed to the decision to leave Syria. All three female respondents spoke about their parents a lot, either as they worried about them in the new host country or because they missed them because they had stayed in Syria. This verbalized attachment to parents was more apparent in the female participants compared to the male. In Syrian culture it is more acceptable for women to show their emotions (Hassan et al., 2015), which might help explain why stressors related to family separation emerged more among female participants since they were more comfortable expressing their feelings. On the other hand, the male participants spoke more frequently about their loss of friends, job instability and fear of the future.

According to Rousseau et al (2001) and Suarez-Orozco et al (2002), there aren't enough studies on the impact of separation of family members among refugees. Miller and his colleagues have found that separation from family members and social isolations were among the worst stressors refugees suffer from (Miller et al., 2002).

### 1.3. Sub theme: Haunting trauma memories

Four out of six respondents either witnessed or personally experienced extreme violence. The haunting memory brought flashbacks of this trauma and influenced how the refugees experienced their new life in their host country:

*“When I left Syria I left with many psychological traumas, the trauma that I witnessed my brother's death in that way. As well as the trauma of leaving Ghouta Uuh the sounds of airstrikes still come a lot to my head and I am always afraid of the loud noises. The thunder that occurred few days ago I was on the street I ran and cried I was about to have a breakdown that moment and I remained upset until the next day.”* Female 35 years old

This participant experienced the death of her brother due to the Syrian government's violence. She expressed stressors related to feeling a lack of justice and political oppression. Her stress was expressed as anger and fear. Her words suggest she may be suffering from PTSD caused by the trauma she witnessed in Syria.

Another participant had been a political detainee in a government prison. He also lost his brother and many of his friends in violent events. He said in his interview:

*“What I have been through left a very big psychological effect on me. As a person who lived this experience of course I am feeling the negative psychological impact from time to time. In some situations I go back to that condition for example someone mentions to me what is happening now in the region that we were living in what the regime is doing I immediately go back with my memory that is why my psyche is tired.”* Male 30 years old

The term “my psyche is tired” is common in Syrian culture. Mentally distressed Syrians explain their condition using local idioms and expressions (Hassan et al, 2015). The two participants who witnessed violent deaths and experienced extreme violence frequently used these idioms to make sense of their symptoms of mental distress. Knowing these idioms and local expressions helps us understand how the Syrians perceive their psychological condition, the problems they caused and offer suggestions for how to tackle them (Hassan et al, 2015).

## **Theme 2: Environmental migration-related stressors and future instability**

This theme captures the stressors related to difficulties living in Turkey. All the respondents expressed serious suffering resulting from: legal restrictions on refugees, job insecurity and difficulties in social acceptance. The legal restrictions and job insecurity were related because the first participated in causing the other. Many participants explained that the movement restrictions on refugees caused them to lose job opportunities which made them fear for the future. As for the social acceptance stressors they were related to the language barrier. Moreover, some participants explained not having the time or energy to study Turkish because they worked in difficult jobs.

## 2.1. Sub theme: Legal Restrictions on Refugees

The legal restrictions that the Turkish government imposed made it difficult for Syrian refugees to move from one state to another. It also prevented them from traveling outside Turkey. If they do travel to another country they have to pay a fine and risk getting banned from re-entering Turkey for five years. As mentioned above this restriction caused them to miss out on job opportunities if they were not living in the city where the job was being offered. Five of the participants mentioned that the legal restrictions also made it difficult for them to see close family members adding to their frustration.

*“The legal issues are the worst thing after my traumas ... uuh every time I want to travel from a place to another I should obtain a travel permit which needs an official invitation ...I am trying to get out of Turkey to issue a residence permit but practically we are imprisoned in Turkey even if you leave Turkey you cannot enter it again you need re-entry visa and since we entered Turkey illegally we might be banned up to five years uuh these legal things are so complicated here in Turkey they are so frustrating frustrating and disappointing that I keep running in circles.”*

Female 35 years old

The repeating of the word “frustrating” and the use of the word “imprisoned” suggests how impacted the respondent was with these legal restrictions.

## 2.2. Sub theme: Job insecurity

For all the participants a stable job was considered one of the components necessary to ensure a stable future. Even though all the respondents, regardless of gender, had job-related stressors, this stressor was more pronounced among the male respondents. The following participant explained that, as the man in the house, providing for his family was his responsibility and he feared his family’s collapse if he was unable to do it. His words express the fear caused by the daily uncertainty of whether he would be able to feed his own children:

*“Me as a man I am speaking, the man is responsible for his family and children he is required to provide for the household required at least 2000 Turkish Lira a month he has to provide it if he doesn’t provide it his children will become homeless, his wife will leave him and he will be completely devastated”* Male 30 years old

All the respondents mentioned instability, especially income instability, and a fear of an unknown future. The male respondents talked about instability and fear of the future a lot more than the female respondents and without any prompting. The reason might be that in Syrian culture, men are financially responsible for providing money for the family and ensuring the stability and continuity of the money flow:

“I don’t know what I will do in the future I don’t have a prospective of the future because uuh the situation here for example my old job and my current job I didn’t expect to work in such a job.”  
(Male 24 years old).

A good job was also found to be a source of well-being in other studies because it contributes to refugees’ integration and social inclusion (Evans & Repper, 2000).

### 2.3. Sub theme: Difficulties in social acceptance

Four out of six participants mentioned incidents related to discrimination and difficulties in feeling socially accepted in Turkey. For all of them, the language barrier made this discrimination worse. According to the following female participant, the language barrier made her more vulnerable to sexual harassment because she couldn’t respond and defend herself:

*“In Istanbul I was a victim of what I call harassment situation and I was not able to say one word. An old man he was older than 50 years old tall and big. The bus was so crowded and he was standing directly behind me and rubbing himself into me I couldn’t change my place because it was so crowded and I couldn’t say anything.”* Female 27 years old

In displacement situations women and girls are more vulnerable to all forms of exploitation, violence and gender stereotyping perpetrated by men from the host society (Ward & Marsh, 2006). Sexual harassment and sexual violence incidents against female Syrians have increased in Turkey over the last several years (Narlı et al, 2019). Such incidents are severely impacting the mental health of Syrian women and girls in Turkey requiring urgent humanitarian health and integration interventions (Narlı et al, 2019).

As for the following male participant, the language barrier made him upset because his Turkish landlord cheated him out of money. He explained that the language barrier annoys him a lot in such situations: *“A lot of money was cheated out of me they took advantage of us and the language barrier doesn’t help us ... It makes me so sad when the Turks take advantage of me.”*  
Male 26 years old

The same participant mentioned in the quote below three situations in which he faced discriminations. One of the discriminative comments was made by his Turkish friend which seem to have upset him the most.

*“One time I went out with a group from Adana they humiliated us saying Assad is good why don’t you go back all of the Syrians who got out (of Syria) are extremists and things like that and today before I came on the way in the street a person said to us “Syrians get out” he humiliated*

*us for example even our Turkish friends my friend my friend he says since you (Syrians) came and Turkey got damaged prices have become higher and troubles happening things like that"*  
Male 26 years old

In the previous quotes and many others, the respondents used terms like ("*I was a victim*") and ("*they took advantage of us*"). All the respondents were very distressed when sharing such examples. Their body language supported the emotions they felt: red faces, shivering, sad expressions, low voices and other signs were all observed during the interviews. This body language suggested that the Syrian refugees were suffering and not well integrated in Turkey. They perceived the Turkish community as "an enemy" taking advantage of them, and thus perceived Turks as their oppressors.

Paradoxically, according to recent studies, Turkish society appeared welcoming of Syrians up through the year 2012 (Narlı et al, 2019). However, with increasing numbers over the years the Turks changed their attitudes towards Syrians as they began perceiving them as burden (Nielsen, 2016; Narlı et al, 2019). This big difference in hospitality and acceptance for Syrians in Turkey was observed mainly at the end of 2015 (Narlı et al, 2019). News about violations and negative acts towards Syrians in Turkey has increased over recent years and has been combined with calls to extradite Syrians by Turkish politicians and social media (Narlı et al, 2019). Such social and political media has contributed to influencing how Syrians are perceived by the Turks and perceive social rejection (Narlı et al, 2019).

### Theme 3: Constructive coping mechanisms

This theme captures the most emergent constructive coping mechanisms. Even though stress-coping mechanisms varied a lot among participants, two main themes emerged. The first one related to family and friends support. Without any exception all the participants mentioned spending time with family and friends as a remedy for helping them relieve stress. The second most emerging theme was religion and faith. Other mechanisms mentioned related to participating in entertaining activities.

Many years ago researchers stressed the importance of studying refugees' stress-coping strategies to determine the best relief programs for them (Knudsen, 1991).

Some of the environmental stressors in the host country such as tiring work conditions and worrying about the future made it more difficult for all of the men to cope with displacement-related stress and trauma. The male participants mentioned not having time to grieve their

losses and think about their homesickness. On the other hand, the female participants mentioned trying to understand their sadness and focusing on the positive. It was observed that all of the female respondents had mostly constructive coping mechanisms, whereas the male respondents had both constructive and un-constructive coping mechanisms. For example, all the male participants mentioned smoking as a first response to stressors, which will be discussed further in a sub theme.

### 3.1. Sub theme: Family and friends support

There was a tendency among all six respondents to speak about their families' and friends' support as a main factor in their stress-coping experience. There were small differences between respondents in this regard. For example, some preferred walking and talking with a friend while others preferred going on picnics to a place of beautiful nature with family members.

*“The first thing that helped me the most is my brothers and sisters. I came here I found people I found shelter I found people to help me support me financially and psychologically in many aspects. When a person moves to a new country a lot of changes occur that can harm the person in general his psychological state yes they helped me in it the most.”* Male 24 years old

For this participant, his brothers' and sisters' support was the best support for him to overcome his acculturation stressors. He repeated “I found people” and seemed relieved and confident when he said it. He means with people close to him that can help him financially and psychologically like his brothers and sisters. Half of the participants mentioned spending time with family and friends in a beautiful place. For example the following quote is from a female participant who was talking about supportive activities with friends. As she was talking she remembered how happy she was: *“I love nature a lot I mean nature is a very big breather for me if anything is disturbing me whether I miss my parents or I am upset of someone or upset of life the nature is my breather and the sea specifically”* (Female 27 years old).

The most common stress-coping mechanism that the participants in my study used was social support. Similar results were found in previous qualitative and quantitative studies (Theodoratou et al, 2015; Thomas et al, 2011; Finch et al, 2003; Schweitzer et al, 2006). In one quantitative study conducted on refugees from different origins including Syria, 65% of them used social support to cope with migration-related stressors (Theodoratou et al, 2015). In Australia, Sudanese refugees' social support was shown to significantly improve their mental health



outcomes (Schweitzer et al, 2006). In Nepal, social networks such as family and friends also helped them cope better with migration-related stress (Thomas et al, 2011).

### 3.1. Sub theme: Faith and religion

Five respondents mentioned faith as a coping mechanism. This stress-coping mechanism included prayers, meditation, reading the Quran and believing in religious principles, such as being patient, as earning future rewards and believing that the future would be better: *“Religion, psychological health and physical health are all one thing that form the human being. uh for example in my religion Islam I have “with hardship there will be ease” whatever happens with me if I believe in this it will help me”* (Male 24 years old).

For this participant, religion is not only a stress reliever it is an important component of being a human being. Such a statement suggests how important religion is for him and how it plays an important role in his life. For example, believing in religious principles is what helps him overcome life difficulties.

In Theodoratou et al’s (2015) study on refugees from different origins, 80% of participants also used faith to cope with stress which was the second most emergent theme in my current study. In another study on Mexican refugees in the US, it was proved that a stronger reliance on religion decreased the likelihood of depression (Finch et al, 2003).

### 3.3. Sub theme: Entertaining activities

All the participants mentioned participating in entertaining activities to help them cope with stress. The type of activities was different for each of the participants: Two participants mentioned playing football, two preferred watching movies, one listened to music and the last participant liked making jokes to make others laugh. These types of activities helped them to stop thinking about the reality in which they were living and could be interpreted as a form of ‘escapism’. These findings are in line with other studies conducted on refugees. An IPA study on Afghan refugees in Canada also found that leisure activities such as playing sports helped them with their capacity to cope with stress and contributed to overall acculturation (Stack & Lwasaki, 2009).

#### Theme 4: Un-constructive coping mechanisms

Although most of the coping strategies cited by the refugees were positive and constructive, some unconstructive coping approaches were also mentioned. These included: withdrawing, excessively watching the news, sleeping, crying, and doing nothing. However, the most common unconstructive coping approach was smoking. Half of the respondents talked about smoking when they are stressed. Two of them are males and one is female. Ironically, all three respondents who mentioned smoking as a reaction to stress also noted that it did not alleviate their stress. Even though they smoked when they are stressed it still did not contribute to soothing them and they recognized that it had become a habit: “Uuh of course I smoke but smoking didn’t improve my mood and my psychological state” (Male 30 years old). Such negative coping mechanisms were also found among Syrian refugees in other studies (Hassan et al., 2015).

#### Theme 5: Not accepting mental health services

This theme captured the perceptions and knowledge of Syrians regarding mental health as well as their attitudes towards it. According to the advice given by the key informants, the terms “mental illness” and “mental health” were not used with the interviewees. Instead the term “psychological wellbeing” was used to avoid stigmatizing or distressing the participants, and encourage them to share examples.

When the participants were asked about the meaning of psychological well-being answers varied. Female participants linked being satisfied with one’s life as an indication for a positive psychological state. Male participants offered similar answers, focusing on not allowing depression and worries to influence a person’s life.

When asked about mental health services, four out of six respondents responded that they would be unwilling to access them. Two participants would be willing however had not done so because they did not trust the Syrian mental health professionals in Gaziantep. The participants who completely refused the idea of accessing mental health services were mostly men from the rural areas of Syria. Their reasons varied but were mainly due to the following: believing each person is best at handling their own issues; stigma surrounding mental disorders; a lack of trust in mental health professionals; and not being willing to share personal issues with others. This last reason was a major theme among all the male participants and none of the female participants. According to respondents’ statements and the researchers’ personal knowledge of

Syrian culture, women accept sharing their feelings and emotions more than men and were more accepting of the idea of mental health services. According to Brody (1993), gender differences in the expression of emotions exists in all cultures. Hassan and his colleagues also found differences in coping approaches between male and female Syrian refugees (Hassan et al., 2015). For women, coping mechanisms included expressing emotions through support groups as the most common outlet (Hassan et al., 2015).

All the three male respondents mentioned that they felt discomfort when they shared emotional or personal issues with others. One of them had been traumatized by the war and explained that he felt embarrassed and humiliated about what he had been through and thus did not want to share it. However, keeping it to himself only made him feel worse. All the male participants highlighted that they had difficulties in sharing their personal stories with me. They mentioned an unwillingness to share private issues with a stranger as one of the main reasons for not visiting a psychologist or a psychiatrist.

*"I am not convinced of specialized help. For example, a psychologist come to our organization and a person go speaks whatever he wants but I feel it is a play. How will he (a psychologist) help me if I didn't help myself! He will just listen and I don't like talking a lot. Really I don't tell things to a stranger. I talk to my trust circle. Now I am having difficulties talking to you with all due respect"* Male 26 years old

As suggested in the previous quote, in Syria, expression of emotions is not acceptable among men (Hassan et al., 2015). Emotional suffering is expected to strengthen men and they are not supposed to complain about it (Hassan et al., 2015).

Moreover, the respondent mentioned helping himself. This concept emerged in four interviews. The respondents preferred handling their own issues and acting as their own psychologists: *"I feel that a person is his own doctor I am an educated person I know this specialty exists I know it is a field of study but I don't think I will become comfortable if I uuh I don't prefer to I don't think it will relieve me I feel I should treat myself."* (Female 26 years old). In Syria, suffering is considered a part of life that a person should overcome on his own (Hassan et al., 2015). The participants chose dealing with their psychological distress on their own. In their interviews they mentioned so many times that they know what works for them better than a health professional would know. A male participants who comes from rural areas mentioned a stigma related to the use of mental health services in his society: *"You know our society if you mention someone is seeing a psychiatrist it is considered a negative thing that no one talks about"* Male 30 years old In Syria, health awareness in general and mental health awareness in particular are not good in rural areas (Hassan et al., 2015). This might have increased the stigma of mental illness and

mental distress among Syrians who come from rural communities and might have caused the participant to have negative opinion of seeking mental health services.

Even though two female participants considered eventually seeing a psychologist, still they did not trust the quality of the services: *"I know there is gossip in Gaziantep not all these staff are professional I don't want my personality, my thoughts and my feelings to become the gossip you can say there is a lack of trust."* Female 35 years old

## Limitations

The small sample size is a limitation since it does not provide a comprehensive understanding of the Syrian refugees' experiences. Nonetheless, IPA does not aim to create universal and representative models of a population, rather it focuses on exploring individual experiences through the voice of participants. Another limitation is the age of those included in the sample (between 24 and 35, mean age: 28, std: 3.95). Including older adults may have resulted in the identification of different stressors, stress-coping mechanisms and perspectives regarding mental health, and offered useful perceptions of migration-related stressors based on age groups. However, as previously mentioned, older adults were difficult to recruit and time restrictions made it challenging to include a larger sample.

As a Syrian from the same community who migrated to Turkey, I have experienced the same phenomena under research. This may have introduced some bias. The participants may have provided more detail regarding cultural and contextual issues if the interviewer was an outsider (Twine et al, 2000). Also the participants may have attempted to provide expected answers and not perceive me as neutral since I am Turkish as well. These potential biases were tackled by recruiting participants who were not directly related to my social community and I avoided political topics. Being an insider also had advantages. It facilitated access to the participants because I was able to gain trust and speak in their language (and dialect). This allowed me to dig deeper and interpret their perceptions and understanding of their experiences.

## Recommendations

Given the small sample size and limited age range of the participants, more research exploring the experiences and perspectives of older Syrian refugees in Turkey is still needed, as well as a study that explores how children have experienced migration.

The findings from this study can contribute to the design of psychological support programs for refugees that build on existing stress-coping strategies. Psychiatrists, psychologists and other mental health professionals should avoid using certain potentially offensive terms and understand how patients perceive mental illness and what is acceptable as treatment, such as a focus on social networks, community and religion.

Finally this study recommends the Turkish government to consider the psychological well-being of refugees when creating laws that restrict freedom of movement and limit job opportunities for migrants. Government stakeholders are recommended to cooperate with public health stakeholders and employment agencies to ensure the integration of refugees and guarantee future stability.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Informed Consent Form

### **Informed Consent Form for Syrian refugees in Turkey**

**Name of Principal Investigator:** Sara Alhelali Saab

**Name of Universities:** École des Hautes Études en Santé Publique - Bahçeşehir University

**Name of Project:** Exploring how Syrians in Turkey cope with displacement-related stress and trauma and how they handle potential mental issues

**This Informed Consent Form has two parts:**

- Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)
- Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)

### **Part I: Information Sheet**

#### **Introduction**

My name is Sara, I am pharmacist and Master of Public Health student. I am doing my thesis in Turkey with Bahcesehir University.

I am doing a research to explore what are the migration-related stressors for Syrians in Turkey and how they handle the stress. I will also explore how the Syrians perceive psychological wellbeing and how they seek help.

I invite you to participate in the research which I am doing. The research will include long interviews with Syrians in Turkey. The interviews will be recorded, transcribed then analyzed. In the results of the study some quotes might be used from the interviewees' answers. All the names will be confidential and there will be no information indicating who said what. You are being invited to take part in this research because we feel that your experience as a Syrian refugee in Turkey can contribute much to our understanding and knowledge of the displacement and its related stressors. You can choose to participate or not. If you choose to participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview. If you do not understand some of the words or concepts, I will take time to explain and you can ask me questions at any time.

## **Procedures**

I am asking you to help us learn more about the experience of displacement and living in Turkey. I am inviting you to take part in this research project. If you accept, you will be asked about displacement and migration related stressors, coping strategies to deal with these stressors, your knowledge and perspectives about mental illness and your attitudes towards seeking out mental health services. You do not have to share any knowledge that you are not comfortable sharing. During the interview, I will sit down with you in a comfortable place. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and I will move on to the next question. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except my advisors [Odessa and Nilufer] will access to the information documented during your interview. The entire interview will be tape-recorded, but no-one will be identified by name on the tape. The tape will be kept on my personal laptop and memory stick. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except me. We are asking you to share with us some personal information, and you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview if you don't wish to do so, and that is also fine. You do not have to give us any reason for not responding to any question, or for refusing to take part in the interview. There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us find out more about the topic to guide future policies and programs.

## **Confidentiality**

The research being done in the community may draw attention and if you participate you may be asked questions by other people in the community. I will not be sharing information about you to anyone outside of the research team. The information that I collect from this research project will be kept private. Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name. It will not be shared with or given to anyone except my two advisors.

## **Sharing the Results**

Nothing that you tell us today will be shared with anybody outside the research team, and nothing will be attributed to you by name. I might use quotes that you said in the interview for my thesis. I will not use any names and I will try to publish the thesis later.

## **Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

You do not have to take part in this research. You may stop participating in the interview at any time. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

## Who to Contact

(Example: If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact me: [Sara Alhelali 05317444587 sarah94hil@gmail.com])

## Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Day/month/year

## Appendix 2: Arabic Informed Consent Form

نموذج الموافقة المستنيرة للسوريين في تركيا

اسم الباحث الرئيسي: سارة الهلالي صعب

اسم الجامعات: كلية الدراسات العليا في الصحة العامة (باريس) - جامعة باهشي شهير (اسطنبول)

اسم المشروع: استكشاف كيفية تعامل السوريين في تركيا مع الإجهاد والصدمات المرتبطة بالنزوح

يتكون نموذج الموافقة المستنيرة من جزأين:

• ورقة المعلومات (لمشاركتك معلومات عن الدراسة معك)

• شهادة موافقة (للتوقيع إذا اخترت المشاركة)

الجزء الأول: ورقة المعلومات

المقدمة

اسمي سارة ، أنا صيدلانية وطالبة ماجستير في الصحة العامة. أقوم برسالتي في تركيا مع جامعة بهجيشهير.

أقوم بإجراء بحث لاستكشاف الضغوطات المرتبطة بالهجرة للسوريين في تركيا وكيف يتعاملون مع الضغوط. سأستكشف أيضاً كيف ينظر السوريون إلى العافية النفسية وكيف يلجأون للمساعدة.

أدعوك للمشاركة في البحث الذي أقوم به. سيتضمن البحث مقابلات طويلة مع السوريين في تركيا. سيتم تسجيل المقابلات صوتياً باستخدام الهاتف الجوال ، كتابتها ثم تحليلها. أثناء كتابة نتائج الدراسة يمكن استخدام بعض الاقتباسات من إجابات المشاركين في الدراسة. ستكون جميع الأسماء سرية ولن تكون هناك معلومات تشير إلى من قال أي جملة. تمت دعوتك للمشاركة في هذا البحث لأننا نشعر أن تجربتك في تركيا يمكن أن تسهم كثيراً في فهمنا ومعرفتنا بالنزوح والظغوط المرتبطة به. يمكنك اختيار المشاركة أم لا. إذا اخترت المشاركة ، يحق لك الانسحاب من الدراسة في أي وقت أثناء المقابلة. إذا كنت لا تفهم بعض الكلمات أو المفاهيم ، فسأستغرق بعض الوقت لشرح ذلك ويمكنك أن تسألني أسئلة في أي وقت.

## الإجراءات

أطلب منك مساعدتي في معرفة المزيد عن تجربة العيش في تركيا. أنا أدعوك للمشاركة في هذا البحث. إذا وافقت ، فسوف يتم سؤالك عن الضغوطات المرتبطة بالهجرة ، وكيفية التعامل مع هذه الضغوطات ووجهة نظرك حول العافية النفسية. ليس عليك مشاركة أي معلومة تشعر أنك غير مرتاح للمشاركة. خلال المقابلة ، سأجلس معك في مكان مريح. إذا كنت لا ترغب في الإجابة على أي من الأسئلة خلال المقابلة ، يمكنك أن تقول ذلك وسأنتقل إلى السؤال التالي. المعلومات المسجلة سرية ، ولن يتمكن أي شخص آخر غير المشرفات على بروفيسورة أوديسا و بروفيسورة من الوصول إلى المعلومات الموثقة أثناء مقابلتك. سيتم تسجيل المقابلة بالكامل، ولكن لن يتم تحديد أي شخص بالاسم على الملف الصوتي. سيتم الاحتفاظ بالملف الصوتي على الكمبيوتر المحمول الشخصي الخاص بي. المعلومات المسجلة سرية ، ولا أحد غيرك. نطلب منك مشاركة بعض المعلومات الشخصية معنا ، وقد تشعر بعدم الارتياح عند التحدث عن بعض الموضوعات. ليس عليك الإجابة على أي سؤال أو المشاركة في المقابلة إذا كنت لا ترغب في ذلك ، وهذا جيد أيضاً. ليس عليك أن تقدم لنا أي سبب لعدم الرد على أي سؤال ، أو لرفضك المشاركة في المقابلة.

لن تكون هناك فائدة مباشرة لك ، ولكن من المرجح أن تساعدنا مشاركتك في معرفة المزيد حول الموضوع لتوجيه السياسات والبرامج المستقبلية.

## سرية المعلومات

قد يجذب البحث الذي يجري في المجتمع الانتباه ، وإذا شاركت ، فقد يتم طرح أسئلة من قبل أشخاص آخرين في المجتمع. لن أشارك المعلومات الخاصة بك لأي شخص خارج فريق البحث. سيتم الاحتفاظ بالمعلومات التي أجمعها من هذا المشروع البحثي. أي معلومات عنك سيكون لها رقم بدلاً من اسمك. لن يتم مشاركتها مع أي شخص أو إعطائه باستثناء البروفيسورين المشرفتين على أطروحتي.

## نشر نتائج البحث

لن يتم مشاركة أي شيء تخبرنا به اليوم مع أي شخص من خارج فريق البحث ، ولن يُنسب إليك أي شيء بالاسم. قد أستخدم اقتباسات قلتها في المقابلة لأطروحتي. لن أستخدم أي أسماء وسأحاول نشر المقالة لاحقاً التي قد تحتوي اقتباسات قلتها لكن دون اسمك.

## الحق في الرفض أو الانسحاب

ليس عليك المشاركة في هذا البحث. يمكنك التوقف عن المشاركة في المقابلة في أي وقت. سأعطيك فرصة في نهاية المقابلة لمراجعة ملاحظتك ، ويمكنك أن تطلب تعديل أو إزالة أجزاء منها ، إذا كنت لا توافق على ملاحظاتي أو إذا لم أفهمك بشكل صحيح.

## معلومات التواصل

(مثال: إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة ، يمكنك طرحها الآن أو لاحقاً. إذا كنت ترغب في طرح الأسئلة لاحقاً ، فيمكنك الاتصال بي:

sarah94hil@gmail.com] 05317444587]

## الجزء الثاني: شهادة الموافقة

لقد قرأت المعلومات السابقة ، أو تمت قراءتها لي. لقد أتيت لي الفرصة لطرح أسئلة حول هذا الموضوع وأي أسئلة طرحتها قد تم الرد عليها. أوافق طوعاً على أن أكون مشاركاً في هذه الدراسة.

اسم المشارك \_\_\_\_\_  
توقيع المشارك \_\_\_\_\_  
التاريخ \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3: Interview Guide

### Exploring the lived experiences of Syrians coping with displacement-related stress and trauma

**Research Questions and Interview Guide:** This study will explore how Syrian refugees in Gaziantep city, Turkey:

- 1) experience displacement-related stress and trauma,
  - 2) cope with stress.
  - 3) perceive mental health disorders
  - 4) perceive seeking mental health services
- 

**Population:** Syrian refugees who were displaced to Gaziantep city in southern Turkey due to the Syrian conflict.

Abbreviations	
IQ	Interview question
RQ	Research question

**Introduction:** Al Salam Alaikum, my name is Sara, I am pharmacist and Master of Public Health student. I am doing my thesis in Turkey with Bahcesehir University. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today {explain study & stress confidentiality and anonymity}.The interview will last for one hour or one and a half hour do you approve to spend that time with me?I would like to ask you some questions regarding migration-related stressors and how you coped with any stress you may have experienced. I would also like to ask you about what you know about

psychological wellbeing. There are no right or wrong answers and if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions at any point, do not hesitate to let me know. I also want to let you know that during the interview I may be taking notes and recording, but I want to assure you that your answers will remain confidential and there will be no way of tracing the recordings or your words back to you. So please feel free to speak honestly and openly. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Where they are from:

Family situation:

Employment/study:

Contact information:

RQ.1. How are the Syrians experiencing displacement and settlement in Turkey?

**IQ.1.1 Tell me the story about your migration from Syria**

Probes: When did you arrive to Turkey?

How did you get here?

With whom?

What led you to choose Turkey?

**IQ.1.2 How have you settled-in since your arrival in Turkey?**

Probes: Can you describe your day yesterday?

**IQ.1.3 How do you feel in Turkey? or “How have you been feeling since your arrival in Turkey?”**

Probes: what do you think is causing you think you feel like that?

RQ.2. What are the migration-related stressors for the Syrians in Turkey?

**IQ.2.1 Have you faced any? (If hasn't mentioned yet)? Are you facing any challenges/difficulties now in Turkey?** (these may have already come up when they were describing their last typical day – so you can note them as you hear them and then probe to get more information about certain stressors you will have detected)

Probes: Are you having educational, livelihood, or social challenges?

Are you having difficulties with the Turkish culture and the Turkish lifestyle?

Are there any activities that you used to do in Syria to alleviate stress but not anymore in Turkey?



RQ.3. What are the coping strategies of the Syrian refugees against war and displacement stressors?

**IQ.3.1 What are the things that you do to help you feel stronger?**

Probes: What do you do when you are stressed?

Did you have certain activities that helped you cope with stress in Syria?

Are you using them in Turkey?

RQ.4. What is the Syrians' knowledge and perceptions of mental health? (Probe stigma)

**IQ.4.1 Is there something disturbing you?**

Probes: How is your health do you have pain or problems?

Do you have people whom you love around you?

**IQ.4.2 What does the term “psychological well-being” العافية النفسية mean to you?**

Do you think psychological wellbeing is an important part of health?

RQ.5. The Syrian refugees' attitudes towards seeking assistance for mental health services.

**IQ.5.1 How much do you take care of your psychological well-being?**

Probes: Do you consider yourself to be in good psychological state?

**IQ.5.2 Have you ever thought about getting help to deal with your sadness/anger (if the interviewee mentions any) and your (tired psychologically) نفسيته التعبانة**

Probes: What type of help? (Family, friends, professional Supporter/Doctor, religion)

Do you know any of your relatives or friends who have sought help?

Do you know any of your relatives or friends who need professional help?

What do you think of their experience?

**Closing Comments:** Do you have any questions for me? Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me and to tell me about your experience and recommendations. Do you mind if I get back to you if I needed to ask you anymore questions?

## Appendix 4: Arabic Interview Guide

استكشاف كيفية تعامل السوريين في تركيا مع الإجهاد و الضغوطات المرتبطة بالنزوح

ستستكشف هذه الدراسة كيف يقوم اللاجئين السوريين في مدينة غازي عنتاب ، تركيا ب:

- 1) تجربة الإجهاد والصدمات ذات الصلة النزوح ،
- 2) التعامل مع التوتر
- 3) إدراك اضطرابات الصحة العقلية
- 4) فهم السعي للحصول على خدمات الصحة العقلية

مقدمة: مرحبا ، اسمي سارة ، أنا صيدلانية وطالبة ماجستير في الصحة العامة. أقوم برسالتي في تركيا مع جامعة باهتشي شهير. كسر الجليد

شكراً لك على موافقتك على التحدث معي اليوم {أشرح الدراسة التأكيد على عدم الكشف عن الهوية}.

المقابلة ستستغرق بين ساعة أو ساعة و نصف. هل أنت موافق على إعطائي هذا الوقت؟

أود أن أطرح عليك بعض الأسئلة بخصوص الضغوطات المرتبطة بالهجرة وكيف تعاملت مع أي مصاعب قد تكون تعرضت لها. أود أيضاً أن أسألك عما تعرفه عن العافية النفسية ..

لا توجد إجابات صحيحة أو خاطئة ، وإذا كنت تشعر بعدم الارتياح في الرد على أي أسئلة في أي وقت ، فلا تتردد في إخباري.

أريد أيضاً أن أخبرك أنه خلال المقابلة قد أقوم بتدوين الملاحظات والتسجيل ، لكنني أود أن أؤكد لك أن إجاباتك ستبقى سرية ولن تكون هناك طريقة لتتبع التسجيلات أو كلماتك إليك. لذلك لا تتردد في التحدث بصراحة وانفتاح.

هل لديك أي أسئلة قبل البدء؟

الاسم: العمر:

الجنس:

من أين: الوضع العائلي:

الوظيفة / الدراسة: معلومات الاتصال:

1.IQ. أخبرني قصة هجرتك من سوريا

للاستكشاف: ايمت وصلت إلى تركيا؟ أو ايمت طلعت من سوريا؟

كيف جيت؟

مع مين؟

شو يلي خلاك تنقي تجي ع تركيا؟

2.IQ. كيف مزبط أمورك هون؟ كيف ماشية أمورك هون؟

للاستكشاف: احكي لي شلون كان يومك مبارحة أو شلون يومك المعتاد بتركيا؟

3.IQ. كيف حاسس حالك بعنتاب؟

للاستكشاف: ليش برأيك هيك حاسس؟

4.IQ. واجهتك أي صعوبات بتركيا؟ (إذا لم يتم ذكرها بعد)؟ عم تواجهك أي تحديات / صعوبات هلا في تركيا؟ شو الصعوبات أو التحديات غيرها يلي واجهتك في تركيا؟

للاستكشاف: عم تواجه صعوبات بالدراسة أو الشغل أو اجتماعية؟

هل تواجه صعوبات مع العادات بتركيا ونمط الحياة التركية؟

كان في أنشطة بتعملها في سوريا لما تكون متدابق وما عم تحسن تعملها هلا بتركيا؟

5.IQ. شو الشغلات يلي بتحسها عم تفويك؟

للاستكشاف: شو بتعمل لما بتحس بالتوتر و الضغط؟

عندك أنشطة معينة بتساعدك بالتعامل مع الضغوطات بسوريا؟

هل تستخدمها في تركيا؟

6.IQ. هل هناك شيء يزعجك؟

للاستكشاف: كيف هي صحتك هل لديك ألم أو مشاكل؟

هل لديك أشخاص تحبهم من حولك؟

7.IQ. شو يعني مصطلح "العافية النفسية" بالنسبة لك؟

برأيك الصحة النفسية جزء مهم من الصحة؟

8.IQ. فكرت شي يوم تطلب مساعدة للتعامل مع حزنك / غضبك (إذا ذكر الشخص الذي أجريت معه المقابلة) أو (متعب نفسيًا) نفسيتك التعبانة؟

للاستكشاف: شو نوع من المساعدة؟ (الأسرة ، الأصدقاء ، المعالج / الطبيب ، الدين)

بتعرف أي من أقاربك أو أصدقائك الذين طلبوا المساعدة؟

هل تعرف أي من أقاربك أو أصدقائك الذين يحتاجون إلى مساعدة مختصة؟

ما رأيك في تجربتهم؟

التعليقات الختامية: هل لديك أي أسئلة أخرى بالنسبة لي؟ نشكرك مرة أخرى على قضاء بعض الوقت في مقابلتي وإخبارنا بتجربتك وتوصياتك. هل لديك مانع إذا عدت إليك إذا كنت بحاجة لطرح أسئلة عليك؟

## Appendix 5: Codebook

Section	Code	Sub code
<b>Syria-related Migration Stressors</b>	Being Forcibly Displaced	Not being able to go back home
		Political oppression
		Not receiving justice
	War-related loss and trauma	Separation of family and friends
		Emotional loss of home
		Financial loss
		Memory flashbacks
<b>Turkey-related migration stressors</b>	Refuge in Turkey and future-related worries	Legal Restrictions on Refugees
		Future instability
		Job insecurity
	Discrimination and difficulties in social acceptance	
	The language barrier	Difficulties at work
		Vulnerability to sexual harassment
		Taken advantage of (financially)
Environmental mastering		
<b>Stress-coping mechanisms</b>	Family and friends support	Sharing with them
		Seeking their advice
		Financial support
		Doing activities together
		Knowing they are here with you
	Religion	Praying
		Faith

		Believing in religious principals
		Meditation
	Focusing on the positives	
	Understanding the sadness	
	Entertaining activities	Sport
		Music
		Watching movies
		Joking
	Un-constructive coping	Staying alone
		Sleeping
		Crying
Smoking		
Doing nothing		
Eating		
<b>Perceptions of mental health</b>	Meaning of psychological well-being	
<b>Attitudes towards seeking mental health services</b>	Not accepting mental health services	Doesn't like sharing personal issues
		Stigma
		A person is the best psychiatrist for himself
	Lack of trust in mental health professionals	They don't respect confidentiality
	They are not well trained	

## Appendix 6: An Example of Phase 1 of the Analysis

Withdrawing	Smoking	Doing nothing	Religion	Family and friends support	Sport
أنا بفضل أقدّم لحالي واحد يعمل جو لحالي	والله بصراحة الدخان		لدين أساسي هو من أساسيات النبي آدم بشكل عام معتقداته الدين و الصحة النفسية و الصحة الجسدية هنن شي واحد يكونوا	اول شي بلي ساعدني أكثر شي أخواتي اجبت ليهون لقيت عالم و لقيت مأوى لقيت عالم تساعدني تدعمني مادياً و نفسياً بكرا شغلة و	
	أحياناً بفكر ااه طيبجا انا بدخن بس الدخان ما عدل لا قليل ولا بعد ما غير من نفسي و مزاجيتي. انا من الأساس	هي المشكلة ما في شي بعملو بروحلي هي الحالة بصير بفكر انا ما لازم اكون هيك مع اهلي و مع اصدقائي	منروح الصبح و نحن طالعين منصلي و منقرأ الفاتحة على روحنا والله- انا خلص بعمل بلي على و الباقي على الله-	ممكن احكي لصديقي مقرب الي او اسنان انا برتحلو بحكيو مشان ادافشو و اخذ رأبو و ياخذ رأبي بحس هيك احسن هاد الدوا	والله لجأت للرياضة من فترة يعني بلعب كل كم يوم كل فترة لعبة كرة قدم اي بهديك الفترة حسبت انو في تخيير يعني
			لجأ لربي بالدرجة الأولى بتقرب منو أكثر و بقول خلص سلمت أمري لاه الله بدعي أكثر الدعاء الصلاة هيك	كان زوجي عم يساعدني ويدعمني يعني كان عندي دعم نفسي كثير حلو	

## Appendix 7: An Example of Phase 2 of the Analysis

### **Male 24 years old:**

Being forcibly displaced  
 The Turkish language stressor at work  
 Tiring work  
 Legal restrictions on refugees  
 Future instability  
 Smoking  
 Staying alone  
 Brothers and sisters support  
 The internet  
 Religion  
 Living in a bad psychological condition  
 Not knowing what to do to improve psychological well being  
 Not accepting mental health services

### **Male 30 years old:**

Being forcibly displaced  
 Political oppression

No Justice  
 Memory flashbacks of traumatizing events  
 Family separation  
 Worrying for family members  
 Loss of friends and social life  
 Job insecurity  
 Future instability  
 Smoking  
 Not knowing what to do  
 Talking to a friend  
 Religion  
 Sport  
 Living in a bad psychological condition  
 Shy to share what he has been through  
 Stigma of mental services  
 Not accepting mental health services  
 He can be psychologist of himself/herself  
 A psychiatrist wouldn't understand him

**Female 26 years old:**

Family separation  
 Job insecurity  
 Legal restrictions on refugees  
 Husband support  
 Religion  
 Focusing on the positives  
 Not accepting mental health services  
 Being her own psychologist

Appendix 8: Table showing presence of themes across cases

Themes	M 24	M 30	F 26	F 27	F 35	M 26
1- War-related Loss and trauma	+	+	+	+	+	+
2- Environmental migration-related stressors and future instability	+	+	+	+	+	+

3- Constructive Coping Mechanisms	+	+	+	+	+	+
4- Un-constructive Coping Mechanisms	+	+	-	+	+	+
5- Not accepting mental health services	+	+	+	+	+	+

## Appendix 9: Translated Quotes

"بكل لحظة بصير يفكر شو لازم آخذ معي اذا رجعت؟ اي ممكن أنا لحتي أرضي نفسي هيك عم فكر... لو الأمور مستقرة و في خدمات والله 5 دقائق ما يفكر مباشرة يرجع"

*"Every second I think what should I take with me if I went back? Yes maybe I am thinking like this to satisfy myself... if things settled down and services became available I swear I wouldn't think for five minutes, I would immediately go back."*

"هاد المكان مو الي (تركيا) في عدم شعور بالانتماء بتحسي بيئة رافضتك نحن طلعنا (من سوريا) بوقت كثير متأخر"  
*"This place (Turkey) isn't my place I don't feel I belong I feel the atmosphere is rejecting me we got out (from Syria) so late"*

"مفرغ اليوم عالطريق كثير رفيقي كمان صابير نفس الشيء فيه عم نحكي اذا هدبت الأمور منرجع لأ ما يرجع أنا فقدت شعور المواطنة بسوريا والله ما رح ارجع لو شو ما صار لأنو لا البلد بلدنا ولا الشعب شعبنا فهمي بتدابق يعني وين صرنا شلون كنا شافيين الهدف و وين صرنا و العالم يلي ماتت كلها على شو ماتوا هدول مشان هيك بصير! لأ"

*"Today, I vent my feelings with my friend since the same thing is happening to him. We were talking about if things calm down in Syria that we will not go back. I lost the feeling of belonging to Syria I swear to God I will not go back no matter what happens because the country is no longer our country and the people are no longer our people. It makes me upset what happened to us, we had a certain goal and we achieved something different and all the people that died for what? For this to happen! No!"*

"توفوا بهي الحرب يعني كثير كثير يلي توفوا أعداد أنا عم أحكي عن أصدقاء مقربين كنا عايشين سوا... كلن ماتوا بظروف غير طبيعية قصف رصاص أو كان هو بأحد الطرفين و اتقتل عدة سيناريوهات بس فقدتهم. بعض يلي ضلوا منن نزحوا على أوروبا سافروا"

*"They died in this war so many so many so many died I am talking about close friends we were living together... they all died in abnormal conditions; strikes, bullets or was on the side of a fighting party and got killed. Many scenarios but I lost them. Those of them who remained migrated to Europe...they travelled."*



"معاناتي اني بدي شوف اهلي لو وين ما كان فأنا ما بقدر متى ما طلعت برات تركيا ما عاد اقدر ارجع و اهلي مو بهي السهولة يدخلو على تركيا ف آه هي القصة"

"My suffering is that I want to see my parents no matter, wherever I can see them. I cannot because if I leave Turkey I cannot go back to it again and for my parents it is not that easy for them to get inside Turkey...uuh that is the story"

"انا محملة حالي هاد الذنب انو انا طالعتهن و بابا عمرو 73 و ماما 64 فعلا هنن مالن مضطرين يتحملو كل هاد العذاب بسبب خياره... طبعاً مالن مرتاحين لأنو انتي لما تنقلعي من محيطك الاجتماعي و من أملاكك انتي لما قاعدة ببيت هاد ملك غير لما بدك تستأجري بيت و المستأجر تغير مزاجو حتى لو عطيتيه اكثر بدو يطالعك انتي بتعرفي ب هي التفاصيل انتي خاضعة للمزاج العام و التغيرات السياسية و التجاذبات السياسية يلي عم تصير بالبلد فعلياً انتي مالك حاسة بالاستقرار انتي دائماً قلقة. يمكن نحن و الاطفال مرنين متناقم منلاقي محيط اجتماعي جديد لكن الكبار بالنسب لأ فعلياً أهلي عازلين حالن عن المحيط تماماً"

"I am feeling guilty that I got them out (of Syria) my father is 73 years old and my mum is 64 years old they really didn't have to endure all this suffering due to my choice... of course they are not feeling comfortable because they were forced out of their social network and out of their properties. Us and the children we are flexible we cope we find a new social network but the old ones no they have practically isolated themselves completely."

"انا اول ما طلعت من سوريا طالعة بصدمات نفسية متعددة صدمة أني شفت أخي ميت بهي الطريقة صدمة انو هو هاد الشخص في عبء كثير اخلاقي انا يمكن كنت محملة حالي زيادة أنو هو هاد الشخص يلي دائماً كان ساند ضهري انا ما قدرت اطلع قبل بدقيقتين انقذه مع انو منطقياً بعرف اصابته مستحيل انقاذا كمان صدمة الطلعة من الغوطة آه أصوات القصف يلي لسا لهلاً كثير بترجع براسي و دائماً بخاف من الصوت العالي الرعد يلي صار من كم يوم أنا بالشارع ركضت و بكيت ح بصير كان معي انهيار بلحظتها و بقيت متعكرة لتاني يوم"

"When I left Syria I left with many psychological traumas, the trauma that I witnessed my brother's death in that way. As well as the trauma of leaving Ghouta Uuh the sounds of airstrikes still come a lot to my head and I am always afraid of the loud noises. The thunder that occurred few days ago I was on the street I ran and cried I was about to have a breakdown that moment and I remained upset until the next day."

"أمور يلي تعرضتلها تركت أثر نفسي كثير كبير. أنا كشخص عشت هي التجربة اشو عم اشعر فأكيد عم اشعر بوجود الأثر السلبي بنفسيتي من وقت لآخر بتجيني مواقف أحياناً بترجعني لهي الحالة بتذكر مثلاً أشوف بوست معين لصديق من اصدقائي يلي توفوا أو أشوف مقطع فيديو من حفلة كان معي فلان فيها أو مثلاً حدا بذكر لي انو يعني حالياً بالمناطق يلي كنا عايشين فيها هيك هيك عم يعمل النظام مثلاً براجع دغري بذاكرتي لذلك النفسية متعبة جداً"

"What I have been through left a very big psychological effect on me. As a person who lived this experience of course I am feeling the negative psychological impact from time to time. In some situations I go back to that condition for example someone mentions to me what is happening now in the region that we were living in what the regime is doing I immediately go back with my memory that is why my psyche is tired."

"طبعاً المواضيع القانونية يعني من أسوأ شيء بعد هي الصدمات ... آه كل ما بدي أنا سافر من مكان لمكان لازم أخذ إذن سفر و إذن السفر بدو دعوة رسمية فأنا بروح باخذلن الدعوة الرسمية بيعطوني إذن مؤقت كم يوم أنا يرجع يرجعلن ياه .أنا عم حاول اطلع برات تركيا مشان زبط إقامة يعني فعلياً نحن محبوسين بتركيا حتى يعني اذا طلعتي من تركيا ما ح تحسني ترجعي بدك فيزا re-entry و نحن كوننا داخلين ع تركيا بطريقة مالا نظامية ممكن يصير علينا ban يوصل ل 5 سنين ف آه كتير معقدة الأمور القانونية بتركيا هي كتير محبطة محبطة و مسببة لليأس أتو أنا بدي اضل عم ادور بحلقة"

"The legal issues are the worst thing after my traumas ... uuh every time I want to travel from a place to another I should obtain a travel permit which needs an official invitation ...I am trying to get out of Turkey to issue a residence permit but practically we are imprisoned in Turkey even if you leave Turkey you cannot enter it again you need re-entry visa and since we entered Turkey illegally we might be banned up to five years uuh these legal things are so complicated here in Turkey they are so frustrating frustrating and disappointing that I keep running in circles."

"أنا ك رجل عم أحكي الرجل مسؤوليته أمام عائلته و أولاده مطلوب منه الصراف عالييت مطلوب منو عالأقل 2000 ليرة بالشهر بدو بجيبا اذا ما جابا اولاده تشرودو زوجته تركته و راحت و انهار نهائي ف هو بدو يصير يفكر في ناس عندن منظمات عم تساعدن ما بيلجأو للحرام الحمدلله تربيتي ما بتسحلي و ديني ما بيسحلي بس لما بدو يجوع بدو يقول أنا مجبر بدي أطعمي الولاد كتير منسمع هي الجملة شلون بدي اطعمي اولادي هيك منحكي"

"Me as a man I am speaking, the man is responsible for his family and children he is required to provide for the household required at least 2000 Turkish Lira a month he has to provide it if he doesn't provide it his children will become homeless, his wife will leave him and he will be completely devastated"

"ما بعرف بالمستقبل شو بدي ساوي ما عندي اي نظرة للمستقبل لأنو ال آه الوضع هون مثلا شغلي القديم و شغلي هاد أنا ما توقعت مثلا أشتغل هاد الشغل"

"I don't know what I will do in the future I don't have a prospective of the future because uuh the situation here for example my old job and my current job I didn't expect to work in such a job."

"باسطنبول أنا اتعرضت لسيميه موقف تحرش و أنا ما قدرت احكي كلمة من قبل رجل كبير بالعمر كان فوق ال 50 سنة و كان طويل و ضخم. الباص كتير كان زحمة و هو واقف وراي مباشرة و عم يحتك فيني بشكل مستمر و أنا ما كنت قدرانة لا اغير مكاني لأنو كتير زحمة ولا احكي شيء"

"In Istanbul I was a victim of what I call harassment situation and I was not able to say one word. An old man he was older than 50 years old tall and big. The bus was so crowded and he was standing directly behind me and rubbing himself into me I couldn't change my place because it was so crowded and I couldn't say anything." Female 27 years old

"كتير نلش مني مصاري كتير ينصبو علينا و اللغة ما بتساعدنا... كتير بتقهرني وقت التركي مثلا بياكلي حقي"

"A lot of money was cheated out of me they took advantage of us and the language barrier doesn't help us ... It makes me so sad when the Turks take advantage of me."

"مرة طلعت مع مجموعة من أصدقاء من أهنة مثل بهدلونا انو الأسد منيح و ليش ما بترجعوا و انتو الطالعين كلكن متشددين و هيك شي كانت معنا يعني بهدلنا اي مثلا في Suriyeli git رفيقتنا عم تفهم عليهن اي هيك نظرتن و هالأ اليوم والله قبل ما اجي بالطريق بالشارع واحد قلنا كثير حتى في رفقاتنا التراك رفيقي رفيقي بقول انتو من لما جيتو نتزعت تركيا غليت الاسعار و في زعرنة مدري شو هيك شي"

"One time I went out with a group from Adana they humiliated us saying Assad is good why don't you go back all of the Syrians who got out (of Syria) are extremists and things like that and today before I came on the way in the street a person said to us "Syrians get out" he humiliated us for example even our Turkish friends my friend my friend he says since you (Syrians) came and Turkey got damaged prices have become higher and troubles happening things like that"

"اول شي يلي ساعدني أكثر شي أخواتي اجيت لهون لقبيت عالم و لقبيت مأوى لقبيت عالم تساعدني تدعمني ماديا و نفسيا بكزا شغلة و شفني لما واحد ينتقل من مكان لمكان في اختلاف ثقافات لغة اختلاف كزا شغلة هنن ساعدوني فيها كثير الواحد اول ما ينتقل عدولة جديدة ممكن بصير عندو تغيرات كتيرة التغيرات ممكن تضر النبي آدم بشكل عام حالتو النفسية أكثر شي اي هنن ساعدوني فيه"

"The first thing that helped me the most is my brothers and sisters. I came here I found people I found shelter I found people to help me support me financially and psychologically in many aspects. When a person moves to a new country a lot of changes occur that can harm the person in general his psychological state yes they helped me in it the most." Male 24 years old

"انا كثير بحب الطبيعة يعني الطبيعة كمان متنفس كثير كبير الي من اي شي مدايقني سواء مشتاقا لأهلي او متدايقا من حدا او حتى دايقا فيني الحياة فالطبيعة هي متنفس بالنسبة الي و البحر تحديدا"

"I love nature a lot I mean nature is a very big breather for me if anything is disturbing me whether I miss my parents or I am upset of someone or upset of life the nature is my breather and the sea specifically"

"الدين و الصحة النفسية و الصحة الجسدية هنن شي واحد يكونوا الإنسان آه مثلا أنا بديني بدين الإسلام عندي "إن بعد العسر يسرا" شو ما صار معي إذا كنت مآمن بهاد الشي هاد بساعدني"

"Religion, psychological health and physical health are all one thing that form the human being. uh for example in my religion Islam I have "with hardship there will be ease" whatever happens with me if I believe in this it will help me"

"اه طبعا انا بدخن بس الدخان ما عدل من نفسياتي و مزاجياتي"

"Uuh of course I smoke but smoking didn't improve my mood and my psychological state"

"مساعدة مختصة ما اقتنعت فيها مثلا بيجي لعنا داعمين نفسيين عالمنظمة وبروح واحد بيحكى شو ما كان بس بحسها ضحك عاللحي شو بدو يساعدي اذا انا ما ساعدت حالي! بس رح يسمع و انا بحب كتير احكي والله عنجد لحدا غريب ما بحكي في عندي دائرة بثق فيهن بحكيلن انا هالأ ملاقي صعوبة احكيلك مع احتراممي"

*"I am not convinced of specialized help. For example, a psychologist come to our organization and a person go speaks whatever he wants but I feel it is a play. How will he (a psychologist) help me if I didn't help myself! He will just listen and I don't like talking a lot. Really I don't tell things to a stranger. I talk to my trust circle. Now I am having difficulties talking to you with all due respect"*

"بحس انو خلص الواحد هو يكون طبيب حالو انا انسانة مثقفة و دارسة و يعرف انو هاد اختصاص موجود يعني هاد مجال موجود بس ما بحس اني رح ارتاح اذا انا اه ما بفضل و ما بحس هو يلي رح يريحني بحس انا لازم اعالج حالي من حالي"

*"I feel that a person is his own doctor I am an educated person I know this specialty exists I know it is a field of study but I don't think I will become comfortable if I uuh I don't prefer to I don't think it will relieve me I feel I should treat myself."*

"بتعرفي عنا بمجتمعنا مجرد انك تذكرني اذا حدا بروح عنكتور نفسي هي بتعتبر سلبية و ماحدا بيحكيها"

*"You know our society if you mention someone is seeing a psychiatrist it is considered a negative thing that no one talks about"*

"بعرف بعنتاب في جو النميمة هي الكوادر ما كلها بروفيشنال انا عم اعري نفسي و شخصيتي و مشاعري و افكاري و اشياء ممكن ما اقولها ادام حدا ما بدني ياها تصير حديث اجتماعي في غياب ثقة فيكي تقولي"

*"I know there is gossip in Gaziantep not all these staff are professional I don't want my personality, my thoughts and my feelings to become the gossip you can say there is a lack of trust."*