

Symposium | Asylum and Mental Disorders : [Symposium 65] Assessment and care for asylum seekers with severe mental health problems

📅 Sat. Sep 27, 2025 10:40 AM - 12:10 PM JST | Sat. Sep 27, 2025 1:40 AM - 3:10 AM UTC 🏛️ Session Room 6 (Conference Room B)

## [Symposium 65] Assessment and care for asylum seekers with severe mental health problems

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### [SY-65-04] Strengthening the frontline workforce to enhance transcultural mental health support in Belgian asylum reception centres.

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International frameworks on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) highlight the critical role of basic psychosocial care provided by non-specialised staff as a foundation for mental health promotion. In asylum reception centres, this positions frontline workers as key actors in observing, identifying and responding to residents' mental health needs. Yet in practice, MHPSS is mostly outsourced to specialised professionals, which leaves the potential of frontline staff under-leveraged. This presentation draws on an applied research project on MHPSS in Belgian asylum reception centres. It commences with findings from a large-scale survey and qualitative interviews with staff across the reception network, exploring their existing competences, perceived training needs, and preferred learning modalities related to MHPSS. Building on these insights, the presentation outlines a participatory approach to strengthening MHPSS capacity, showing how the training needs assessment—combined with the experiential knowledge of residents—led to the co-design of an e-learning and intervision programme tailored to the multidisciplinary teams in the sector. It further underscores the importance of organisational scaffolding to support the integration of newly acquired competences into daily practice, emphasising the need to address both individual capacity and the institutional conditions in which staff operate. By integrating insights from research and practice, the presentation offers actionable pathways to foster sustainable ecosystems of mental health care for people navigating displacement and asylum in host countries.