

Symposium | Imigrant, Refugee : [Symposium 63] Rethinking Mental Health Support for Refugees

2025年9月27日(土) 10:40 ~ 12:10 Session Room 3 (Large Hall A)

**[Symposium 63] Rethinking Mental Health Support for Refugees**

Moderator: Simon Groen (De Evenaar Center for Transcultural Psychiatry), Hans Rohlof (Mental Care Center)

**[SY-63-01] Narrative Language Therapy® for refugee children**\*Claudia Blankenstijn<sup>1</sup> (1. linguist (Netherlands))

In the Netherlands, in a small university town Leiden (130.000 inhabitants) not far from the sea, 650 refugees from the Ukraine are making a living, of which 180 are children.

All of these refugee children from the Ukraine, are multi-lingual, as most of them speak Ukrainian, Russian, a few words of English and in the mean while also a little bit of Dutch, because they all are receiving extra Dutch language lessons in school since 2022. Grief and trauma about a lost peaceful family life, about a lost or far away father, about a lost culture and land slumber within all these children.

Some of these refugee children from the Ukraine, approximately 3 to 5%, have not only a severe psychiatric impairment, like Anxiety Disorder and PTSS (APA, DSM5), but also have a Communication Disorder (APA, DSM5).

This special group of children with comorbid communication and psychiatric disorders out of the group of refugee children from the Ukraine, suffer, for example, from Selective Mutism or have otherwise difficulties in the pronunciation and explication of the form, the content and the communicative function of words and sentences in both Ukraine and Dutch. This could be detected by taking clinical linguistic observation tests of the Ukrainian and Dutch language used, executed by a highly educated and specialized Clinical Linguist and a Ukrainian interpreter.

Narrative Language Therapy® (NL-T®) is then deployed to support these children in telling their personal story, while drawing it. And here the healing art comes in, both in words and in pictures.

NL-T® was invented by the author in 2003 in a Centre of Mental Health Transparant and a Clinic of Child- and Youth Psychiatry LUMC CURIUM, both in Leiden, the Netherlands, and is used ever since in a population of children with comorbid communication and psychiatric impairment (Blankenstijn & Scheper, 2003).

In this lecture, one case of a refugee from the Ukraine of 9 years old will be described in detail Her personal story and the picture she draw by telling her personal story will be shown. Both the theoretical background and practical application of the Narrative Language Therapy® will be made accessible.

Claudia Blankenstijn (PhD) is language and communication expert in the Netherlands, with special interest in comorbid communication and psychiatric impairment in children in all sorts of populations, like in refugee children. The book on Narrative Language Therapy® is in the making and will be finished this summer. Lectures, workshops and other forms of education on Narrative Language Therapy® are within her expertise. Narrative Language Therapy® is given to the children with severe communicative needs for over twenty years in the Netherlands and Europe.