



**RECRUITMENT CRITERIA
FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN MENTAL
HEALTH IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS**

**National Mental Health Programme
Ministry of Public Health**

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Introduction

To coordinate the MHPSS response to the Syrian crisis, the MOPH established and is currently chairing with WHO and UNICEF the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Task Force (MHPSS TF). This task force currently includes more than 60 organizations working on the Syrian crisis response in Lebanon with the aim of harmonizing and mainstreaming MHPSS in all sectors and improving access to care. An action plan for the MHPSS TF is set every year to address challenges faced in MHPSS work. One of the objectives of the 2016 action plan of the task force is to “Harmonize recruitment criteria for mental health professionals working in the humanitarian field” with the aim of ensuring that professionals with the minimum needed qualifications are employed.

After review of the recruitment criteria currently in use by task force organizations, and review of international standards and guidelines, including the IASC guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings, the recruitment criteria for work in a humanitarian setting were drafted for the following mental health professionals: Psychiatrist, Clinical Psychologist or Psychotherapist, Mental Health Nurse, Social Worker operating in a mental health setting, mental health case manager, community mental health worker, mental health outreach worker, mental health programme technical adviser and mental health programme coordinator.

The recruitment criteria cover the following areas:

- Education,
- Experience,
- General Skills, divided into:
 - Required professional skills and knowledge
 - Required skills that candidates have already or are willing to build their capacity and knowledge in
 - Competencies
- Computer skills
- Language

Criteria are in line with national guidelines and legislation. All educational degrees and diplomas highlighted as requirements should be earned from an accredited university in Lebanon or from a university outside Lebanon with equation from the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Acknowledgements:

The MHPSS Task Force is grateful for comments on the first draft version of the criteria by individual local and international reviewers affiliated with the following organisations (listed in alphabetical order):

EMDR Association Lebanon

International Medical Corps Headquarters, regional (EMRO) and Country offices

Lebanese Psychiatric Society

Lebanese Psychological Association

Medecins du Monde, Lebanon

National Mental Health Programme, Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon

Order of Nurses in Lebanon

Syndicate of Psychotherapists and Psychoanalysts

World Health Organisation Headquarters, Regional (EMRO) and Country offices

UNHCR Country office

Recruitment criteria

Psychiatrist

Education	Medical degree required (MD and Psychiatry with Psychiatry degree registered at the Lebanese Order of Psychiatrists)
Experience	1-3 years
General skills	<p>Required professional skills and knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastery of the psychiatric assessment and usage of ICD 10/ ICD 11 terminology • Mastery of Pharmacology and willingness to base prescriptions on the recommended MOPH list of psychotropic and neurological medications • Ability to design a treatment plan and refer patient to other professionals when needed • Ability to conceptualize cases from an integrative perspective • Experience providing clinical supervision or leading trainings is a plus <p>Skilled in or willing to build their capacity and knowledge in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing family-centered, goal and strength focused, recovery oriented care plan • Mental health in complex emergencies (IASC guidelines, Psychological First Aid, mhGAP...) • Biopsychosocial model in mental health • Community-based approach in mental health • Human rights-based approach in mental health • Evidence-based approach in mental health (e.g., IPT, CBT, TF-CBT, EMDR) • Knowledge about the predictable stresses of humanitarian aid work and the policies and practices needed to mitigate them <p>Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team • Excellent communication, problem solving, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills • Cultural sensitivity • Ability to adhere to ethical considerations and principles with regard to work with vulnerable populations
Computer skills	Basic Microsoft office and internet use
Language	Fluency in Arabic and in English, French is a plus

Clinical Psychologist or Psychotherapist

<p>Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA in Clinical Psychology • A completed clinical training/practicum in a university centre consisting of at least 100 hours of training under supervision and 300 hours of applied training • Having: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lebanese colloquium certificate for clinical psychologists ○ License to practice the clinical psychology profession from the Ministry of Public Health <p>N.B: A letter of recommendation from a senior clinical psychologist supervisor (holder of a doctorate and/or a scholar) and membership in one of the registered psychological associations of Lebanon is preferable.</p>
<p>Experience</p>	<p>2-5 years</p>
<p>General skills</p>	<p>Required professional skills and knowledge:</p> <p>Assessment skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to provide structured clinical assessments and clear case formulation • Ability to recognize mental health priority conditions as per the mhGAP • Ability to use standardized assessment tools <p>Management skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to developing a consistent and acceptable treatment plan with clear objectives • Skilled in at least one evidenced-based psychotherapy approach • Using different relaxation & stress management techniques • Monitoring and evaluating the psychological progress of the client • Experience providing clinical supervision or leading trainings is a plus <p>Skilled in in or willing to build their capacity and knowledge in::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing family-centered, goal and strength focused, recovery oriented care plan • Mental health in complex emergencies (IASC guidelines, Psychological First Aid, mhGAP...) • Biopsychosocial model in mental health • Community-based approach in mental health • Human rights-based approach in mental health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based approach in mental health (e.g., IPT, CBT,TF-CBT, EMDR) • Knowledge about the predictable stresses of humanitarian aid work and the policies and practices needed to mitigate them
	<p>Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team • Ability to develop rapport with the patient • Excellent communication, problem solving, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills • Interviewing skills • Cultural sensitivity • Ability to adhere to ethical considerations and principles with regard to work with vulnerable populations
Computer skills	Basic Microsoft office and internet use
Language	Fluency in Arabic and in English, French is a plus

Mental Health Nurse

Education	Degree in nursing (preferably BSN) registered at the Ministry of Public, MSN in psychiatry/mental health nursing is a plus
Experience	2-5 years Experience in a mental health setting is a plus
General skills	<p>Required professional skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to assess and develop a nursing diagnosis. • Ability to develop, implement and evaluate a care plan. • Ability to conduct patient or family educational sessions • Ability to administer and monitor medication and medication side effects according to doctor's prescription • Ability to facilitate mental health awareness-raising and promotion sessions at community level is a plus <p>Skilled in or willing to build their capacity and knowledge in::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing family-centered, goal and strength focused, recovery oriented care plan • Mental health in complex emergencies (IASC guidelines, Psychological First Aid, mhGAP...) • Biopsychosocial model in mental health • Community-based approach in mental health • Human rights-based approach in mental health • Evidence-based approach in mental health (e.g., IPT, CBT,TF-CBT, EMDR)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about the predictable stresses of humanitarian aid work and the policies and practices needed to mitigate them
	<p>Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team • Excellent communication, problem solving, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills • Cultural sensitivity • Ability to adhere to ethical considerations and principles with regard to work with vulnerable populations
Computer skills	Basic Microsoft office and internet use
Language	Fluency in Arabic and in English

Mental Health Case Manager ¹

Education	Preferably BA or MA in Social Work with training in mental health OR BA in Psychology OR BS in Nursing with mental health experience
Experience	1-3 years of experience in Psychology OR in social work OR in nursing with previous experience in mental health
General skills	<p>Required professionals skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to conduct a full assessment of a person's needs including mental health needs • Ability to effectively assess and support persons in crisis • Ability to formulate a care plan • Ability to initiate management of the case • Ability to provide follow-up and to monitor as per mental health professional's recommendations • Ability to provide group awareness sessions about mental health
	<p>Skilled in or willing to build their capacity and knowledge in::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing family-centered, goal and strength focused, recovery oriented care plan • Mental health in complex emergencies (IASC guidelines, Psychological First Aid, mhGAP...)

¹ In organisations where both a case worker and a social worker are available, the role of the case worker is to identify the care plan and refer the beneficiary to the social worker in the team (if available). The latter must map the community resources and connect beneficiaries to these recourses in coordination with the mental health team and upon request from any team member according to the care plan. If there are no social workers in the team, the case worker may take on the latter role as well.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biopsychosocial model in mental health • Community-based approach in mental health • Human rights-based approach in mental health • Knowledge about the predictable stresses of humanitarian aid work and the policies and practices needed to mitigate them
	<p>Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent communication, problem solving, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills • Cultural sensitivity • Ability to adhere to ethical considerations and principles with regard to work with vulnerable populations
Computer skills	Basic Microsoft use
Language	Fluency in Arabic, fluency in English is a plus

Social Worker working in a mental health setting

Education	Bachelor or Masters in Social work
Experience	1-3 years
General skills	<p>Required professional skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to conduct full assessment of the person's social needs • Ability to effectively assess and support persons in crisis • Ability to formulate a social intervention plan • Ability to identify and mobilize resources in the person/family/community • Ability to coordinate with the team, including the case manager <p>Skilled in or willing to build their capacity and knowledge in::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing family-centered, goal and strength focused, recovery oriented care plan • Mental health in complex emergencies (IASC guidelines, Psychological First Aid, mhGAP...) • Biopsychosocial model in mental health • Community-based approach in mental health • Human rights-based approach in mental health • Knowledge about the predictable stresses of humanitarian aid work and the policies and practices needed to mitigate them

	<p>Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team • Excellent communication, problem solving, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills • Cultural sensitivity • Ability to adhere to ethical considerations and principles with regard to work with vulnerable populations
Computer skills	Basic Microsoft office and internet use
Language	Fluency in spoken Arabic, fluency in English is a plus

Community Mental Health Worker²

Eligibility criterion	Member of the served community
Education	Basic primary education
Experience	None listed.
General skills	<p>Required skills and knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive knowledge of the community in which he/she lives in • Ability to cooperate with the social workers, case managers and mental health outreach workers
	<p>Skilled or willing to build their capacity and knowledge in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and referring persons with mental disorders • Effectively assessing and supporting persons in crisis • Providing Psychological First Aid • Providing community education, support and activities • Knowledge about the predictable stresses of humanitarian aid work and the policies and practices needed to mitigate them

² The community mental health worker and the mental health outreach worker have two separate roles that each need specific time allocation. If the same person in the organisation is handling both roles, the adequate time to effectively conduct both roles should be ensured.

	<p>Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time management and organizational skills • Excellent communication, problem solving, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills • Cultural sensitivity • Ability to adhere to ethical considerations and principles with regard to work with vulnerable populations
Computer skills	Basic Microsoft use is a plus
Language	Fluency in Arabic, fluency in English and French is a plus

Mental Health Outreach Worker

Education	BA in: Social work OR Psychology OR Nursing
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-3 years of experience in outreach work • Training in Psychological First Aid and detection/referral of persons with mental disorders • Training or experience in community mobilization
General skills	<p>Required professional skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to facilitate awareness raising sessions and mental health promotion sessions at community level • Ability to identify and refer persons with mental disorders • Ability to effectively assess and support persons in crisis • Ability to provide Psychological First Aid • Ability to follow-up in collaboration with the case manager and/or the multidisciplinary mental health team on the care plan • Ability to develop, organize and implement community-based events <p>Skilled or willing to build their capacity and knowledge in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health in complex emergencies (IASC guidelines, Psychological First Aid, mhGAP...) • Biopsychosocial model in mental health • Community-based approach in mental health • Human rights-based approach in mental health • Knowledge about the predictable stresses of humanitarian aid work and the policies and practices needed to mitigate them

	<p>Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent communication, problem solving, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills • Cultural sensitivity • Ability to adhere to ethical considerations and principles with regard to work with vulnerable populations
Computer skills	Basic Microsoft use
Language	Fluency in Arabic, fluency in English and French is a plus

Mental Health Programme Technical Advisor³

Education	MA in Clinical Psychology or MD Psychiatry, both with a clinical license/diploma to provide psychotherapy or psychiatry
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5 years as a psychotherapist or psychiatrist and at least 2 years of supervision. • A letter of completion of the clinical supervision from the clinical supervisor is preferred.
General skills	<p>Required professional skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained on and able to provide supervision on evidence-based psychotherapies and or psychiatric management • Mental health in complex emergencies (IASC guidelines, Psychological First Aid, mhGAP, crisis management protocols...) • Ability to provide technical input into the design, implementation and evaluation of MHPSS programmes.
	<p>Skilled or willing to build capacity and knowledge in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing family-centered, goal and strength focused, recovery oriented care plan • Biopsychosocial model in mental health • Community-based approach in mental health • Human rights-based approach in mental health • Evidence-based approach in mental health (e.g., IPT, CBT,TF-CBT, EMDR) • Knowledge about the predictable stresses of humanitarian aid work and the policies and practices needed to mitigate them

³ If not enough funding is available to hire a mental health programme technical adviser, the recruitment criteria of the programme coordinator (below) can be edited to ensure that the coordinator has the same set of skills as those needed for the technical advisor.

	<p>Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and management skills • Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team • Excellent communication, problem solving, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills • Cultural sensitivity • Ability to adhere to ethical considerations and principles with regard to work with vulnerable populations
Computer skills	Basic Microsoft office and Internet use and basic knowledge of SPSS
Language	Fluency in English and/or in French, Arabic is a plus

Mental Health Programme Coordinator

Education	Masters in Public Health, a degree in a health or mental health related field is a plus.
Experience	1-3 years in management positions
General skills	<p>Required professional skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and management skills • Proposal writing skills • Monitoring and evaluation skills • Trained in human resource management (according to the People in aid code of Good Practice) • Ability to build partnerships with different stakeholders <p>Knowledgeable in or willing to build knowledge in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing family-centered, goal and strength focused, recovery oriented care plan • Mental health in complex emergencies (IASC guidelines, Psychological First Aid, mhGAP...) • Biopsychosocial model in mental health • Community-based approach in mental health • Human rights-based approach in mental health • Knowledge about the predictable stresses of humanitarian aid work and the policies and practices needed to mitigate them <p>Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team • Excellent communication, problem solving, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills

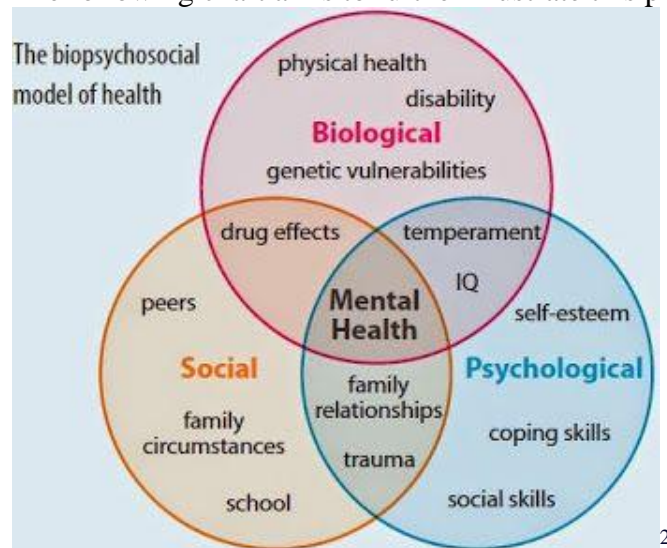
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural sensitivity• Ability to adhere to ethical considerations and principles with regard to work with vulnerable populations
Computer skills	Basic Microsoft and internet use, and basic knowledge of SPSS
Language	Fluency in English and/or in French, Arabic is a plus

Definitions of Key Terms

Biopsychosocial Model of Mental Health

Traditional models that contribute to understandings of mental disorders focus simply on pathophysiological and biological pathways of disease. The biopsychosocial model of mental health, however, aims to assess the interactions between a person's biological makeup, their psychosocial wellbeing, and the sociocultural environment in which they generally live. By combining these factors in assessing one's mental health, a more accurate picture of the factors and influences that affect one's mental health outcomes can be drawn¹ (Definition adapted).

The following chart aims to further illustrate this principle:



Community-Based Approach in Mental Health

Generally speaking, the community based approach in mental health aims at integrating mental health care with that of primary health, rehabilitating long-stay mental health patients in the community, awareness-raising, and implementing anti-stigma programs within communities, initiating population-based preventative initiatives (i.e., changing the social norm through encouraging a change in attitude toward individuals with mental health disorders), and ensuring full participation and integration of people with mental health illness in the community (3). Community-based mental health programs are, at times, not only more effective in treating those with mental illness, they are generally more accessible. Also, they are less likely to infringe on one's human rights.

Human-Rights Based Approach in Mental Health

The main argument for a human-rights based approach to addressing issues in mental health often boils down to efficiency—not just the low cost at which services are rendered, but to lasting, sustainable outcomes. The relationship between human rights and mental health is seen as having at least three main components. First, violations of human rights negatively affect mental health outcomes. Second, many mental health practices, such as “coercive treatment practices,” can restrict and negatively impact human rights. And third, advancement/benefits in mental health increase in conjunction with advancement in human rights (4). Restricting and not respecting human rights can adversely affect mental health outcomes, while respecting and not restricting human rights can have meaningful benefits to mental health outcomes (4).

Several international treaties aim to address human rights issues, one of which is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), an international treaty on human rights developed through the United Nation (5). The convention requires member parties to promote, protect, and ensure full employment rights of individuals living with disability. The main message of the convention urges a celebration of diversity and of dignity, and its ultimate aim is to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability.

In practice indeed, adopting a human-rights based approach entails ensuring access to all persons to quality services regardless of gender, age, nationality, culture, language, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, legal status, geographical location, or other personal characteristics. It also entails emphasis on autonomy and empowerment of patient through openness and honesty in the provision of information, respect in individual interactions, and partnership in service planning and delivery through ensuring the active participation of service recipients.

Evidence-Based Approach in Mental Health

Evidence-based approaches in any field bring together knowledge from multiple disciplines to improve outcomes. In evidence-based mental health practice, evidence of practices observed through multiple scientific studies across multiple fields is considered and implemented in further practice (6).

Examples of evidence-based interventions in mental health:

a) The mental health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP)

The Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) run through the WHO is a program aimed at scaling up services for mental, neurological, and substance use disorders across countries, especially in low- and middle-income countries (7). The program maintains that millions across the world can be effectively treated for depression, schizophrenia, and epilepsy given the right psychosocial assistance and medication. Through these initiatives, another main goal of mhGAP is prevention of suicide, and providing individuals the opportunity to lead normal lives.

The mhGAP-IG is an intervention guide for clinical decision-making for the priority mental health conditions namely depression, psychosis, epilepsy, developmental and behavioural disorders in children and adolescents, dementia, alcohol and drug use disorders, self-harm/suicide, stress, and other significant emotional or medically unexplained complaints. It was developed by WHO and launched in 2010 for low- and middle- income countries.

b) IASC guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support aim at enabling individuals working in the humanitarian field to “plan, establish, and coordinate a set of minimum multi-sectoral responses to protect and improve people’s mental health and psychological well-being in the midst of an emergency” (8).

The focus of the guidelines is on implementing minimum responses, which are essential, high priority responses that should be implemented as soon as possible in an emergency. The guidelines aim to explain how different methodologies in mental health and psychological support complement one another (8). Numerous action sheets in the guidelines outline social supports relevant to the core humanitarian domains, such as protection, general health, education, water and sanitation, food security and nutrition, shelter and camp management (8).

c) Psychological First Aid

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is a humane, supportive and practical response to people suffering exposure to serious stressors and who may need support. It is an approach to help people recover by responding to their basic needs and showing them concern and care, in a way that respects their wishes, culture, dignity and capabilities (9).

PFA involves:

- Providing non-intrusive practical care and support
- Assessing people’s needs and concerns
- Aiding people in addressing basic needs, such as the need for food, water, etc.
- Listening to people but not pressuring them to speak
- Comforting people while helping them feel calm
- Helping people connect to information, services and social support
- Protecting people from further harm

PFA is an effective alternative to “psychological debriefing,” a method that has been found to be ineffective. Contrary to this method, PFA offers techniques to aid in an individual’s recovery that are meaningful in the long term (10).

Orientation in psychological first aid gives responders a framework for how to respond in a natural, supportive and practical manner (11).

d) Evidence-Based Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is the use of psychological approaches and techniques to treat behavioral and emotional problems, maladaptive thought processes, and mental illnesses. It is a relationship between two parties, a qualified and trained therapist and a client/patient. Psychotherapy aims to relieve distress and maladaptive symptoms and to improve the client’s well-being, mental health, and relationships. Evidence-based psychotherapy means that there is scientific evidence in the effectiveness of the psychotherapy approach in relieving negative and maladaptive symptoms. Such scientific evidence is obtained after conducting several controlled research studies. Examples of evidence-based psychotherapy include:

1. Inter- personal Psychotherapy (IPT)

Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT) is an empirically validated treatment for a variety of psychiatric disorders. The evidence for IPT supports its use for a variety of affective, anxiety, and eating disorders, and for a wide age range, from children to the elderly (12).

2. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a talking therapy that can help persons manage their problems by changing the way they think and behave. It is most commonly used to treat anxiety and depression, but can be useful for other mental and physical health problems (13).

3. Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) is an evidence-based treatment for children and adolescents impacted by trauma and for their parents or caregivers. Research shows that TF-CBT successfully resolves a broad array of emotional and behavioral difficulties associated with single, multiple and complex trauma experiences (14).

4. Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

EMDR, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, is an evidence-based psychotherapy approach. The effectiveness of EMDR has been proven for PTSD and in treating anxiety and other psychological disorders that developed after very disturbing life experiences (15).

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