Family-Based Mental Health Promotion for Somali Bantu and Bhutanese Refugees: Results of a Feasibility and Acceptability Trial

Refugees, Migration and Forced Displacement Seminar
Event time: 11/03/20
Luce Hall, Room 203
Speaker, Affiliation: Theresa Betancourt, Boston University

There are disparities in mental health of refugee youth compared with the general U.S. population. Professor Betancourt will be presenting the results of a pilot feasibility and acceptability trial of the home-visiting Family Strengthening Intervention for refugees (FSI-R) using a community-based participatory research approach. The FSI-R aims to promote youth mental health and family relationships. Together with her co-authors, Dr. Betancourt hypothesized and tested whether FSI-R families would have better psychosocial outcomes and family functioning postintervention compared with care-as-usual (CAU) families. They found that FSI-R is feasible to implement “by refugees for refugees” and accepted by communities indicating that it has potential for promoting family functioning and mental health in refugee children and families. Professor Betancourt’s central research interests include the developmental and psychosocial consequences of concentrated adversity on children, youth and families; resilience and protective processes in child and adolescent mental health and child development; refugee families; and applied cross-cultural mental health research. She is Principal Investigator of an intergenerational study of war in Sierra Leone (LSWAY). This research led to the development of a group mental health intervention for war-affected youth that demonstrated effectiveness for improving emotion regulation, daily functioning and school functioning. This intervention, the Youth Readiness Intervention (YRI), is now at the core of a scale-up study within youth employment programs now underway in collaboration with the major development actors and Government of Sierra Leone as a part of the NIMH-funded Mental Health Services and Implementation Science Research Hub called Youth FORWARD. Domestically, she is engaged in community-based participatory research on family-based prevention of emotional and behavioral problems in refugee children and adolescents resettled in the U.S. She has written extensively on mental health and resilience in children facing adversity including recent articles in Child Development, The Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Social Science and Medicine, JAMA Psychiatry, Pediatrics, the American Journal of Public Health and PLOS One.

Event Details

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