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NAVIGATING MENTAL
HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL
SUPPORT RESOURCES:
A PRACTICAL GUIDE



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There are a myriad of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) related documents, guidance notes, and training materials available online. Yet identifying the right resources—and knowing how to apply them in a specific context can be challenging. To support our partners in navigating this complex landscape, the Peace of Mind Foundation has developed a user-friendly Practical Guide.

The Practical Guide brings together a curated selection of key documents, learning opportunities, and networks, each with a clear explanation of its purpose, content, target group, and practical use. It is designed to help organizations quickly find what they need without duplicating efforts or losing time in endless searches.

With its simple layout and accessible language, the Practical Guide makes it easy to find relevant PDFs, training courses, videos, and tools—supporting stronger, more focused MHPSS work on the ground.

For easy navigation, the Guide is divided into three sections:

Integrating MHPSS Throughout the Project Cycle

- Tools and guidance for assessing needs, designing projects, coordinating activities, and monitoring outcomes.

Enhancing MHPSS Skills and Knowledge

- Practical guides, online trainings, webinars, and podcasts for continuous learning and skill-building.

Fostering Peer-to-Peer Learning and Collaboration

- Links to networks, communities of practice, and platforms for sharing experiences and insights with others in the field.

We hope you find the Practical Guide useful and welcome any feedback you may have. We thank the original authors whose work is featured in this document for their valuable contributions and note that all copyrights remain with the respective publishers. Special thanks go to Annika Petune, Isabela Gomes, and Lea Zoric for curating the selection.

The Practical Guide is updated regularly, and we encourage suggestions for additional resources.



TABLE OF CONTENT

1. INTEGRATING MHPSS THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT CYCLE

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 1.1 | A Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (IASC, 2021) | 05 |
| 1.2 | Assessing Mental Health and Psychosocial Needs and Resources: Toolkit for Humanitarian Settings (WHO, 2012) | 06 |
| 1.3 | Handbook for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Coordination (IASC, 2022) | 07 |
| 1.4 | Manual on Community-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies and Displacement (IOM, 2022) | 08 |
| 1.5 | Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Minimum Service Package (IASC, 2022) | 09 |
| 1.6 | MHPSS Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Helpdesk (IASC) | 10 |
| 1.7 | Recommendations for Conducting Ethical Mental Health and Psychosocial Research in Emergency Settings (IASC, 2014) | 11 |
| 1.8 | Who is Where, When, doing What (4Ws) in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support: Manual with Activity Codes (IASC, 2012) | 12 |

2. ENHANCING MHPSS SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 2.1 | Community-based MHPSS in Emergencies and Displacement (IOM) . | 14 |
| 2.1 | Foundations of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (IASC) | 15 |
| 2.2 | International Federation of Red Cross Learning Platform (IFRC) | 16 |
| 2.3 | Introducing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in emergencies (WHO) | 17 |
| 2.4 | Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing of Adolescents in Disaster-Impacted Settings (IASC) | 18 |

3. FOSTERING PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING AND COLLABORATION

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 3.1 | Mental Health Innovation Network | 20 |
| 3.2 | MHPSS Collaborative | 21 |
| 3.3 | The MHPSS Network | 22 |
| 3.4 | The Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement MHPSS Hub | 23 |

1

**INTEGRATING MHPSS
THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT
CYCLE**





A Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (IASC, 2021)



Purpose:

Measuring the impact of MHPSS work is often seen as difficult due to its complexity and cultural variation. This leads to inconsistent monitoring and missed opportunities for learning. The common framework helps overcome these barriers by providing shared tools and indicators, making MHPSS efforts more accountable, effective, and responsive to real needs.

Target Group:

MHPSS program managers and practitioners, monitoring and evaluation specialists, as well as MHPSS donors and policymakers.



Content:

The document includes a standardized M&E framework for evaluating MHPSS interventions in emergencies, key indicators and tools to assess well-being and program outcomes, and practical strategies with case studies to support effective implementation and data collection.

Use Case Example:

A humanitarian organization in a refugee camp uses the IASC M&E Framework to assess the impact of its MHPSS interventions by setting baseline indicators, conducting surveys, and analyzing data to improve support for mental health and well-being.



Total pages*

125

Languages

English, Arabic, French,
Spanish and Ukrainian

*In the English version



Assessing Mental Health and Psychosocial Needs and Resources: Toolkit for Humanitarian Settings (WHO, 2012)



Purpose:

This document responds to field needs by offering clarity on how and when to use different assessment tools. It supports more purposeful data collection by helping practitioners build on existing information, avoid duplication, and focus efforts on what is most useful for effective MHPSS responses.

Target Group:

Humanitarian actors, health sector professionals, program managers, and those designing mental health and psychosocial assessments in emergencies.



Content:

Provides guidance on conducting assessments of MHPSS in crises, explaining how to analyze the situation, available resources, and coping mechanisms. It offers tools for engaging stakeholders, including governments and communities, along with practical advice on collecting data to support effective MHPSS responses.

Use Case Example:

A humanitarian organization in a conflict zone uses this document to guide data collection, assess needs and resources, and engage local stakeholders. The findings help tailor psychosocial support that addresses both immediate needs and long-term recovery.



Total pages*

84

Languages

English, Arabic, French, Italian, Russian and Spanish

*In the English version

Handbook for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Coordination (IASC, 2022)



Purpose:

The Handbook helps humanitarian actors set up and manage effective MHPSS coordination in emergencies. Coordination is often challenging due to the wide range of actors and approaches involved, but it is crucial to avoid duplication, ensure quality, and reach those most in need. The handbook offers practical guidance to strengthen collaboration, streamline services, and support collective impact.

Target Group:

Humanitarian coordinators, MHPSS technical leads, and other actors involved in planning, managing, or supporting MHPSS activities in emergency settings. The Handbook also supports decision-makers involved in funding and shaping MHPSS interventions.



Content:

Covers key principles for effective MHPSS coordination, including leadership, advocacy, and collaboration in humanitarian contexts. It offers practical guidance and tools for establishing and managing coordination mechanisms, and provides strategies for integrating MHPSS into broader humanitarian response plans.

Use Case Example:

In a humanitarian crisis, an MHPSS coordinator uses the IASC Handbook to organize mental health support across agencies, setting up coordination meetings, defining shared goals, and creating referral pathways to ensure a structured, effective, and impactful response.



Total pages*

39

Languages

English, Arabic, French, Latvian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili and Ukrainian

*In the English version



Manual on Community-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies and Displacement (IOM, 2022)



Purpose:

The manual provides humanitarian actors with practical, adaptable guidance for delivering effective mental health and psychosocial support in displacement and emergency contexts. It aims to strengthen community resilience by promoting inclusive, culturally appropriate, and sustainable MHPSS responses.

Target Group:

MHPSS managers, humanitarian actors, NGOs, government agencies, and donors working in emergencies. It is especially relevant for professionals designing or managing psychosocial programs for displaced or crisis-affected populations, including new IOM staff and partner organizations.



Content:

Covers theory, practical tools, and community-based activities. Topics include assessment, mobile teams, cultural practices, conflict mediation, livelihood integration, supervision, and evaluation, all framed within participatory, context-specific, and rights-based approaches to MHPSS.

Use Case Example:

In a displacement setting, a coordinator applies the manual to create psychosocial support activities, like art, play, and group sessions, by mobilizing community resources. The guidance helps ensure the intervention is inclusive, well-structured, and responsive to both individual and collective needs.



Total pages*

232

Languages

English, French, Spanish, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian, Polish

*In the English version

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Minimum Service Package (IASC, 2022)



Purpose:

The 'Minimum Service Package' (MSP) aims to ensure that essential MHPSS services are available in all humanitarian emergencies from the outset. It provides clear guidance on priority actions, interventions, and coordination structures that should be implemented across sectors to protect and support mental health and psychosocial well-being, especially in the early stages of a crisis.

Target Group:

NGOs and local actors implementing MHPSS in crisis settings, those coordinating, designing, or funding such interventions, and experts integrating MHPSS into sectors like health, education, and child protection.



Content:

The MSP outlines priority MHPSS interventions that should be integrated across key humanitarian sectors (such as health, education, protection, and nutrition). It provides practical tools, decision-making checklists, and templates for coordination and implementation. The document also includes guidance for field teams on how to plan, deliver, and monitor essential MHPSS services during the first 12 weeks of an emergency.

Use Case Example:

In a refugee camp an NGO uses the package to establish core MHPSS services—such as psychological first aid, support groups, and referral pathways—working closely with health and protection teams to ensure a coordinated response.



Total pages*

93

Languages

English, Arabic, Bulgarian, French, Latvian,
Polish, Romanian, Spanish and Ukrainian

*In the English version



MHPSS Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Helpdesk (IASC)



Purpose:

The Helpdesk provides hands-on support to humanitarians who are planning, implementing, or refining their monitoring and evaluation of MHPSS activities. Its purpose is to improve the quality and consistency of impact measurement by offering tailored guidance, tools, and expert advice—especially in challenging emergency settings where M&E is often seen as complex or under-prioritized.

Target Group:

Individuals and organizations involved in MHPSS across humanitarian and development settings. It is aimed at those seeking resources, technical guidance, or connections to improve monitoring and evaluation efforts and strengthen the impact of their interventions.



Content:

It offers free, timely support, typically within 24 hours—along with access to global experts, technical groups, and peer networks. Users can also find country examples, e-learning opportunities, and a learning community focused on improving MHPSS related M&E.

Use Case Example:

A monitoring officer in East Africa faces challenges evaluating a newly launched MHPSS program and contacts the Help Desk. They request guidance on mental health assessment tools and advice on qualitative indicators. The Help Desk provides tailored guidance and relevant resources, enabling a more accurate and effective impact assessment.



Languages

English

[→ IASC MHPSS M&E Helpdesk Request Form](#)



Recommendations for Conducting Ethical Mental Health and Psychosocial Research in Emergency Settings (IASC, 2014)



Purpose:

Research on mental health in emergencies comes with serious risks — including retraumatization, exploitation, and harm to vulnerable groups. This IASC document provides simple, practical recommendations to help ensure that MHPSS research is ethical, safe, and respectful. It supports researchers to prioritize dignity, consent, and cultural sensitivity.

Target Group:

Researchers, humanitarian practitioners, program managers, donors, and ethics committees involved in mental health and psychosocial support research during emergencies.



Content:

The document outlines key principles such as informed consent, do-no-harm, cultural sensitivity, and protection of vulnerable groups. It helps researchers navigate the unique ethical challenges of working in conflict, displacement, or disaster contexts—ensuring participants are respected, risks are minimized, and findings contribute to meaningful improvements.

Use Case Example:

A humanitarian organization studies the mental health impact of displacement on refugee women, ensuring informed consent and cultural sensitivity. Focusing on resilience and offering support, they uncover stigma and awareness gaps, leading to a tailored, community-based mental health program.



Total pages*

60

Languages

English and Ukrainian

*In the English version



Who is Where, When, doing What (4Ws) in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support: Manual with Activity Codes (IASC, 2012)

Purpose:

The 4Ws Manual was developed to support the coordination of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) activities in emergency settings by helping actors identify who is doing what, where, and when. Its goal is to reduce duplication, highlight service gaps, and improve the overall coherence of MHPSS responses through shared information and joint planning.



Target Group:

MHPSS coordinators, humanitarian cluster leads, UN agencies, NGOs, and government actors involved in emergency response. It is particularly useful for those responsible for planning, coordinating, and monitoring MHPSS activities in crisis settings.



Content:

The manual provides step-by-step guidance for setting up a 4Ws mapping system, including standardized activity codes, data collection templates, and practical tools for analysis and reporting. It includes instructions on how to engage stakeholders, compile and interpret data, and produce coordination maps and dashboards, facilitating informed decision-making and collaborative action.



Use Case Example:

After an earthquake, the MHPSS technical working group used the 4Ws tool to map actors and activities. Data showed most services were clustered in urban hubs. This led to better resource allocation and programming adjustments—ensuring more equitable mental health support for underserved areas.



Total pages*

20

Languages

English, Hungarian, Latvian, Polish, Romanian and Ukrainian

*In the English version

2

**ENHANCING MHPSS SKILLS
AND KNOWLEDGE**





Community-based MHPSS in Emergencies and Displacement (IOM)



Purpose:

The purpose of this course is to strengthen participants' understanding of how to plan, implement, and evaluate community-based MHPSS in crisis settings. It emphasizes engaging communities as active partners in healing and recovery, promoting sustainable, culturally appropriate, and locally owned interventions in humanitarian contexts.

Target Group:

Professionals providing MHPSS in displacement and emergency contexts and individuals implementing interventions directly within affected communities.



Content:

Community-based MHPSS strategies for emergencies and displacement settings and practical guidance on designing, implementing, and evaluating programs in crisis contexts. It also includes training on engaging affected populations in service development and delivery to strengthen community resilience.

Use Case Example:

After severe flooding displaced thousands, an NGO deployed new staff trained in IOM's Community-based MHPSS course. Drawing on the training, the team mobilized community leaders to co-design safe spaces, facilitated peer-support groups, and introduced culturally appropriate stress management activities. This approach improved emotional well-being and strengthened local ownership and trust in humanitarian services.



Duration

10 modules
30 hours

Languages

English

Certificate



Mobile-friendly



→ [Find out whether this course is for you](#)



Foundations of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS Collaborative)



Purpose:

The purpose of the Foundations of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support course is to provide a clear and accessible introduction to core concepts, principles, and approaches in MHPSS, especially in humanitarian and development settings. It aims to equip learners with foundational knowledge on how to support mental health and well-being in crisis-affected communities, aligning with global standards and good practices.

Target Group:

Designed for NGO workers and local organization staff involved in MHPSS activities, this course is suitable for professionals seeking a structured understanding of their responsibilities and accountability in mental health and psychosocial support.



Content:

The course introduces core MHPSS concepts and approaches, key principles like human rights and do-no-harm, and the distinction between psychosocial well-being and mental disorders. It also explores community-based support, integration into multisectoral responses, and essential skills for frontline workers, with cross-cutting themes such as child protection and inclusion woven throughout.

Use Case Example:

In response to a sudden displacement crisis, a local NGO recruited new community workers to support affected families. Most recruits had no prior experience with mental health. By completing this course, the new staff learned how to recognize signs of distress, offer basic psychosocial support, and refer serious cases to trained professionals. The course helped the NGO rapidly build a confident, well-informed support team.



Duration

3 modules
2-3 hours

Languages

English

Certificate



Mobile-friendly





International Federation of Red Cross Learning Platform



Purpose:

The IFRC Learning Platform is designed as a global hub for high-quality, multilingual courses on humanitarian issues, especially MHPSS. It offers self-paced learning with expert-developed content from Red Cross, Red Crescent, and other organizations, helping volunteers, staff, and practitioners worldwide strengthen their skills in crisis response.

Target Group:

Designed for professionals, volunteers, and practitioners working in MHPSS in humanitarian settings. This resource is suitable for anyone interested in learning more about mental health approaches in crisis and post-crisis contexts.



Content:

Self-paced courses covering psychological first aid, trauma-informed care, and stress management. Developed by Red Cross, Red Crescent, and other experts, they include multilingual resources like video lessons, interactive exercises, and case studies.

Accessing the courses:

Visit the IFRC Learning Platform, create an account, and log in to access the courses. Search for "mental health" to explore available options, then use the side menu to filter courses based on your preferences.



Duration

Varies by
course

Languages

English

Certificate



Mobile-friendly





Introducing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in emergencies (WHO)



Purpose:

This WHO course gives a basic overview of how to support mental health during crises. It explains key concepts, guiding principles, and how MHPSS fits into emergency response.

Target Group:

The course is aimed at humanitarian workers with little or no background in mental health, helping them understand why MHPSS matters and how to get involved.



Content:

Offers an overview of MHPSS in emergencies, covering key concepts, challenges, and intervention strategies. It includes evidence-based practices such as psychological first aid and community-based approaches, along with case studies and resources to support real-world application.

Use Case Example:

After devastating floods displaced thousands, a humanitarian logistics officer new to the field took the WHO MHPSS course to better understand how mental health fits into emergency response. The training helped her recognize signs of distress in affected communities, understand basic principles of psychological first aid, and coordinate more effectively with MHPSS actors.



Duration

17 videos
5 hours

Languages

English, Spanish,
Polish and Ukrainian

Certificate



Mobile-friendly





Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing of Adolescents in Disaster-Impacted Settings (MHPSS Collaborative)



Purpose:

This course aims to promote the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of adolescents in post-disaster settings. It increases the understanding of adolescent development, mental health and psychosocial wellbeing and helps to learn how to effectively support adolescents and their caregivers in a humanitarian context.

Target Group:

Humanitarian and development professionals, teachers, youth workers, and frontline staff working with adolescents (11 – 17) in crisis-affected settings.



Content:

The course explores adolescent development, the impact of emergencies on mental health, and practical approaches to support. It includes modules on creating safe spaces, promoting adolescent participation, and strengthening resilience through schools, families, and communities.

Use Case Example:

A child protection officer working in a flood-affected region in South Asia uses the course to train local teachers and volunteers. With its help, they set up safe spaces in schools and introduce simple psychosocial activities that support students' mental wellbeing and help them return to learning routines.



Duration

6 modules
2–3 hours

Languages

English, Turkish,
Arabic

Certificate



Mobile-friendly



3

**FOSTERING PEER-TO-PEER
LEARNING AND COLLABORATION**





Mental Health Innovation Network



Overview:

The Mental Health Innovation Network (MHIN) is a global platform offering resources, training, and expert connections to support mental health work in crisis and development settings. It helps organizations improve services through evidence-based tools and collaboration.

Target Group:

MHPSS professionals, researchers, humanitarian workers, policy makers, and organizations focused on mental health in global development and crisis settings.



Content:

MHIN provides tools, research, and case studies on mental health, along with training materials and opportunities for capacity building. It also offers a space for stakeholders to share best practices, network, and access practical guides for implementing and evaluating programs.

Use Case Example:

A local NGO in Uganda is preparing to scale up its community-based psychosocial support programme for adolescents affected by conflict. The programme manager uses the Mental Health Innovation Network to explore case studies from similar regions, download toolkits on monitoring impact, and connect with researchers working on youth resilience. Through MHIN, the NGO adapts a proven group-based intervention model and establishes a new partnership with a global mental health research institute – strengthening both the design and evidence base of their project.



[→ Access the platform](#)



MHPSS Collaborative



Overview:

This platform fosters collaboration, knowledge exchange, and innovation to improve mental health and psychosocial support for children, youth, and families in crisis settings. By bridging research and practice, it supports the development of inclusive, evidence-based solutions that respond to real needs on the ground.

Target Group:

MHPSS practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and organizations working on the mental health of children, youth, and families in fragile and humanitarian contexts, as well as local civil society groups engaged in supporting mental health and psychosocial well-being in situations of adversity.



Content:

On this platform, you will find content related to MHPSS research, innovation, and learning resources, along with advocacy efforts, collaborative activities, webinars, and podcasts for professional development.

Use Case Example:

After a major flood in Bangladesh, a humanitarian organization wants to build staff capacity in child and adolescent mental health. They turn to the MHPSS Collaborative for guidance. Through the platform, they access practical tools, evidence-based training modules like "Foundations of MHPSS" and "Adolescent Wellbeing in Disasters," and receive technical advice tailored to their emergency context. This helps the team roll out psychosocial activities that are age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and aligned with global standards.



[→ Access the platform](#)



The MHPSS Network



Overview:

'MHPSS Net' is a global platform hosted by the IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support. It serves as a central hub for practitioners, researchers, and organizations involved in MHPSS across emergency and development settings. The network provides access to tools, training materials, research, and discussion forums. It fosters collaboration, exchange, and coordination among diverse actors.

Target Group:

MHPSS professionals, organizations, and researchers in humanitarian and crisis contexts, particularly those working with vulnerable populations.



Content:

Guidelines, research reports, training resources, and practical tools for implementing MHPSS interventions in emergencies. It also provides platforms for collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Use Case Example:

After a flood emergency in Switzerland, a newly deployed humanitarian team needs quick access to relevant MHPSS guidelines and coordination contacts. They turn to the MHPSS Network to download emergency-specific resources, browse training materials on psychosocial first aid, and join discussion threads with practitioners working in similar contexts. Through the network, they connect with local experts, join a coordination call, and align their activities with global standards—ensuring faster, better-informed support for affected communities.



[→ Access the platform](#)



The Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement MHPSS Hub



Overview:

The MHPSS Hub is a central platform for professionals in humanitarian contexts, offering resources, training materials, and networking opportunities. It provides toolkits and guides to support the design, implementation, and evaluation of MHPSS programs.

Target Group:

Practitioners, researchers, policymakers, donors, and community workers involved in mental health and psychosocial support across crisis settings.



Content:

Offers a rich library of tools, guidelines, research, and case studies to support interventions. It provides training materials for capacity building and serves as a platform for global collaboration and knowledge exchange. Users can also access practical toolkits to design, implement, and evaluate MHPSS programs.

Use Case Example:


After devastating floods in Austria, national Red Cross staff and volunteers needed fast access to practical tools for psychosocial first aid, community-based support, and staff care. Through the RCRC MHPSS Hub, they quickly downloaded guidance materials, training manuals, and self-care resources. The Hub also connected them with peer responders from other national societies who had dealt with similar emergencies, enabling real-time experience-sharing and tailored support in the field.



[→ Access the platform](#)


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