

Knowledge Guide to support the operationalization of the Refugee and Migrant Health: Global Competency Standards for Health Workers

WHO Health and Migration Programme

The WHO Health and Migration Programme brings together WHO's technical departments, regional and country offices, as well as partners, to secure the health rights of refugees and migrants and achieve universal health coverage. To this end, the Programme has five core functions: to provide global leadership, high-level advocacy, coordination and policy on health and migration; to set norms and standards to support decision-making; to monitor trends, strengthen health information systems and promote tools and strategies; to provide specialized technical assistance, response and capacity-building support to address public health challenges associated with human mobility; and to promote global multilateral action and collaboration.



Knowledge Guide

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Foreword

WHO believes that everyone should be able to enjoy the right to health and access to people-centred, high-quality health services without financial impediment, including refugees and migrants, as expressed in the commitment to universal health coverage. To achieve this goal, all countries should aspire to build strong primary health care and health systems, supported by a well-trained, people-centred and competent health workforce that can respond to the needs of all people.

Refugees and migrants may have different and additional health needs compared with host populations and may experience worse health outcomes. These may be caused by physical and emotional stresses from the experiences of migration and displacement, barriers to health service access, inadequate or limited health services, institutional discrimination, levels of health and health systems literacy and restricted access to mainstream services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a cruel example of this issue, with refugees and migrants often living and working in overcrowded conditions where they are unable to take protective measures; they may be exposed to high levels of disease and death and yet have low levels of vaccination.

People-centred health services that address the needs of each person and consider individual characteristics (including migration and displacement experiences) can help to improve the health outcomes of refugee and migrant populations. Building and maintaining trust with refugees and migrants, especially when an individual has had previously distressing or discriminatory interactions with health institutions, is an essential part of providing people-centred health services.

Not all health workers are equipped to provide people-centred health services within the health systems they work in, and further efforts are needed to increase skills in this area. Health workers providing care for refugees and migrants need to be trained and supported to deliver effective and high-quality peoplecentred health services and embrace a particular foundation of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

This Knowledge Guide identifies the baseline knowledge, skills and attitudes required for health workers to provide people-centred care to refugees and migrants, providing a foundation for targeted education and training activities. It is designed for educators and health workers to assist in designing or integrating learning content to enable attainment of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required in the context of refugee and migrant health.

The Knowledge Guide further identifies the behaviours, knowledge, skills and attitudes that embody people-centred health services for refugees and migrants and a corresponding Curriculum Guide has also been produced.

The Knowledge Guide has been developed alongside the WHO Refugee and Migrant Health: Global The Knowledge Guide is being published during 2021, the International Year of Health and Care Workers, which recognizes the dedication and sacrifice of millions of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, and thanks them for their critical role in ensuring our health and prosperity during this difficult time.

I hope that the Knowledge Guide will help and support health workers to improve the provision of peoplecentred health services to refugees and migrants, enabling them to live happier, healthier lives.



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