



### **Statement on the mental health of refugees and asylum seekers**

Asylum seekers and refugees should have access to effective support for their mental health and wellbeing, irrespective of where they are located. Priority should be given to providing support that is trauma informed and culturally appropriate. Maintaining connections should be a key consideration, particularly the connections between children and parents.

Everyone has a right to live a contributing life, including asylum seekers and refugees protected under Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program. Effective support, care and treatment; connections with family, friends, culture and community; and feeling safe, stable and secure are some of the foundations for enabling people to live a contributing life.

People seeking protection and resettlement may have been through traumatic experiences as a result of war, persecution and/or human rights abuse. Effective support, care and treatment for asylum seekers and refugees should therefore be culturally appropriate and trauma informed – regardless of whether the asylum seeker or refugee is in detention or in the community.

Trauma-informed care reflects an understanding of the widespread impact of trauma and potential paths for recovery, and actively seeks to prevent re-traumatisation. Children are particularly vulnerable to the impact of trauma and require trauma-informed care to support their mental health and wellbeing.

Best practice mental health support provided to refugees and asylum seekers should therefore be:

- accessible – regardless of detention or refugee status
- trauma-informed and culturally appropriate
- shaped to support the needs of children in particular
- family-centred – seeking to maintain family connections.