

carrying out research with
Refugees

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*Inclusion and exclusion: Racism and Ethnicity in
Research, Policy and Practice*

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Who is a refugee?

- A refugee is a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country..."

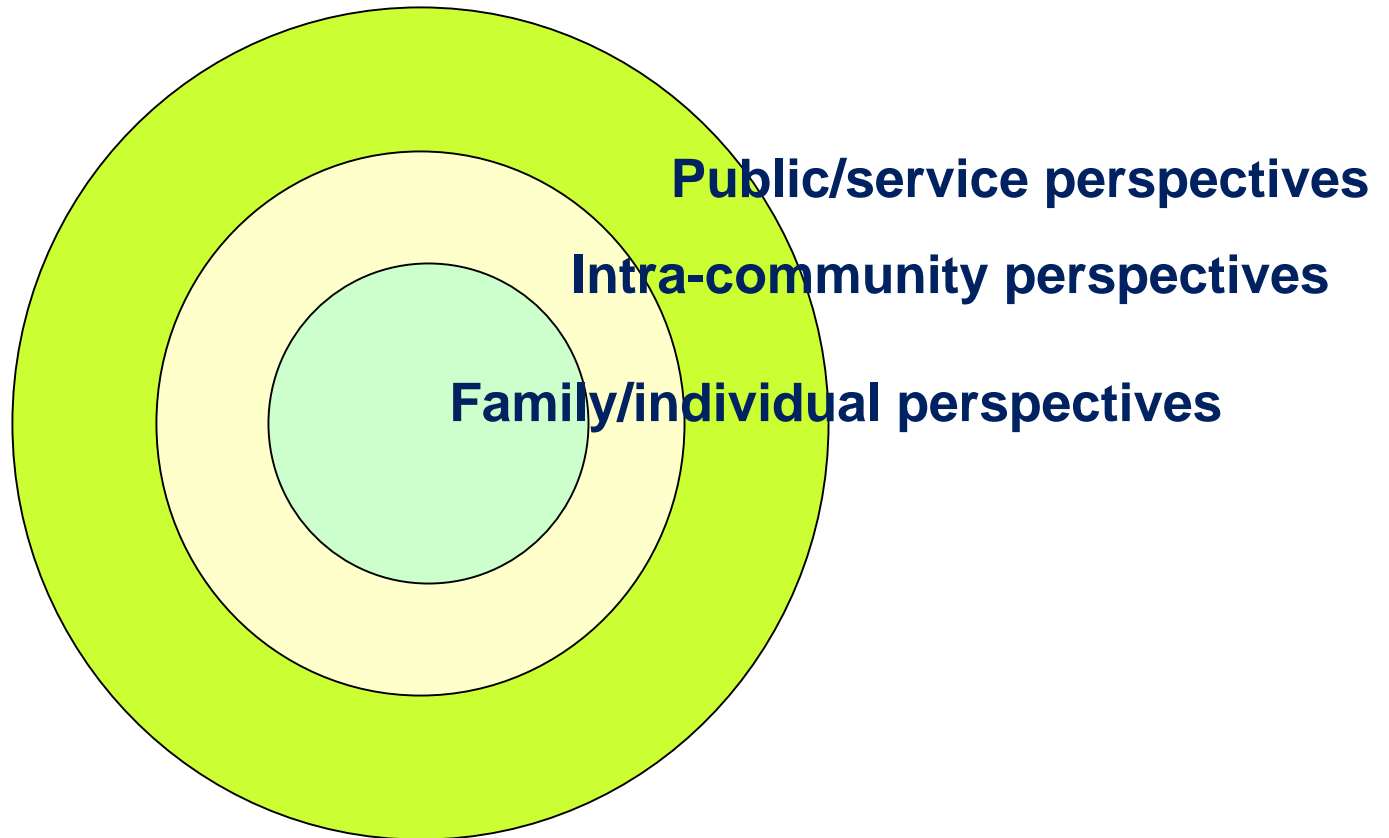
A person is an asylum-seeker if:

- "he is at least 18 years old,
- he is in the United Kingdom,
- a claim for asylum has been made by him at a place designated by the Secretary of State,
- the Secretary of State has recorded the claim, and
- the claim has not been determined."

Factors affecting the mental health of refugees in the UK

- Different experiences and expectations
- Resilience and resourcefulness
- Loss of status and identity
- Bereavement
- Deterioration of health
- Effects of poverty
- Health not a high priority

"The research subject"



Tactics and subterfuge

- Liminality
- Tactics of the weak (de Certeau 1984)
- "Power is bound by its very visibility. In contrast, trickery is possible for the weak, and often it is his only possibility, as a 'last resort'" (de Certeau 1984:37)
- Migrants live "in the systems disjunctions, its fault-lines."
Farmanfarmaian 1992
- Illegality

Listening to Refugee Clients (1)

- Barriers include:
 - Communication
 - Interpreting
 - Trust
 - Cultural differences and expectations
 - Circumstances of the client
 - Living in poverty
 - Bereavement and loss
 - Anxiety and uncertainty due to the asylum process
 - Threat of detention and deportation

Listening to Refugee Clients (2)

- Resources include
 - Refugee Community Organisations
 - Refugee Support Groups
 - Mentoring projects
 - Specialist services
 - Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture
 - Social networks of refugees themselves

Negotiating Access for Research

- Gate-keepers
- Cultural brokers
- Bi-cultural workers
- Personal links
 - Appropriate for building research relationships?
- Snowballing

Interpreting

- How to choose an interpreter?
- A professional interpreter?
- Models of Interpreting
 - Interpreters the mouthpiece of practitioners, emphasis on exact translation of meaning - use of back translation
 - Partnership model - interpreters are equal partners
 - Interpreters as key informant
 - Professional interpreters/bicultural workers

Trust

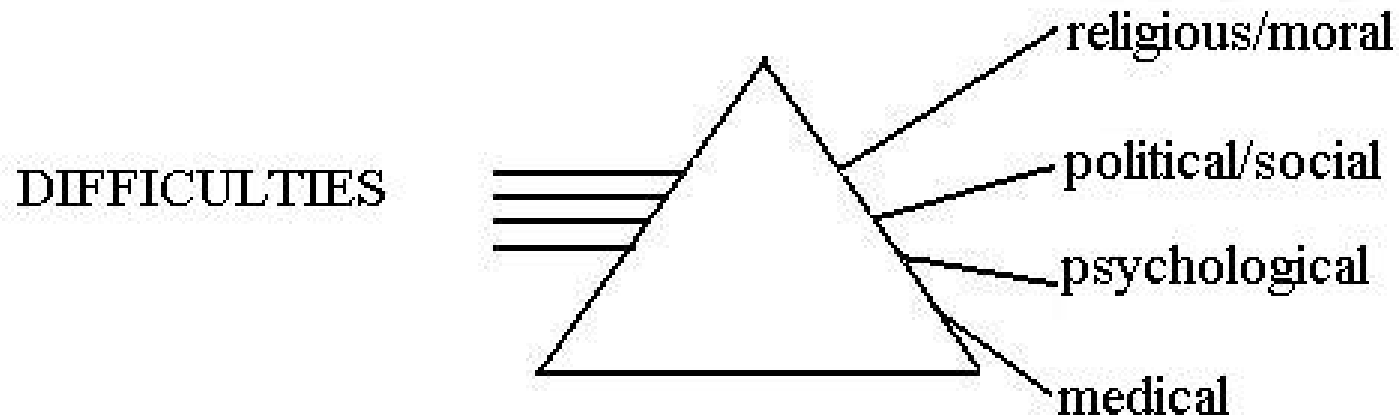
- 'Survivor oriented mistrust'

Marjorie Muecke 1992

- Disbelief and disinterest
- The construction of stories



PROBLEM CONSTRUCTIONS



Participatory Research

- What's in it for them?
- Informed consent
- Valuing contributions
- Remuneration
- Co-researchers