KIDNET – Narrative Exposure Therapy for traumatized children

KIDNET is the child friendly and child adapted version of Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET). It is an evidence-based, short-term treatment approach for trauma spectrum disorders in child and adult survivors of multiple and complex trauma.

During KIDNET the child survivor of traumatic experiences with the assistance of the therapist, constructs a chronological narrative of his life story with a focus on the traumatic experiences. Together the child and the therapist transform fragmented memories of the traumatic experiences into a coherent narrative. For traumatic stress experiences, the therapist asks in detail for emotions, cognitions, sensory information, physiological responses. The child is encouraged to relive these emotions while narrating without losing the connection to the “here and now”. When working with children, different creative tools can be applied to facilitate this process of narrating the traumatic experiences. By reprocessing in this way, meaning-making and integration is facilitated.

The method of narrating the entire life story does not require the child to select a single traumatic event from his trauma history. KIDNET therefore allows reflection on the child’s entire life as a whole, fostering a sense of personal identity.

Empathic understanding, active listening, congruency and unconditional positive regard are key components of the therapist’s behaviour.

At the end of treatment, the recorded autobiography may be used for children’s rights advocacy.

During the workshop the procedure of KIDNET will be presented in detail during lectures and demonstrations. Participants will also work in practice groups of 4-5 participants under close supervision of the facilitator team in order to transfer the newly acquired theoretical knowledge into practice.

Background reading:


Dr. Martina Ruf-Leuschner, PhD, is an assistant professor and university lecturer at the Department for Clinical Psychology at the University of Konstanz (Germany) and a senior clinical consultant in the centre of excellence for psychotraumatology at the University of Konstanz Germany where she works with asylum-seeking survivors and perpetrators of violence from a vast range of conflict-affected areas (Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Turkey etc.).

In cooperation with the NGO vivo international (www.vivo.org) she coordinated field projects for traumatized children in Northern Uganda, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and many other countries. Together with Maggie Schauer, Thomas Elbert and Frank Neuner she developed the child friendly and child adapted version of Narrative Exposure Therapy and coordinated the first study on the efficacy of KIDNET. Her main research focuses on the prevention of trauma and the treatment of trauma spectrum disorders in children and adults.
**Dr. Katy Robjant** is a consultant clinical psychologist specialising in the assessment and treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder in asylum seekers, refugees and survivors of human trafficking. Having worked for many years within specialist trauma services in the National Health Service including the Maudlsey Hospital and the Institute of Psychotrauma, she now works as Head of Therapies at the Helen Bamber Foundation. In cooperation with the NGO vivo international (www.vivo.org) she has provided many trainings in Narrative Exposure Therapy in the UK and also in Sri Lanka, DRC, Uganda and Ukraine. She regularly provides expert evidence for court.