

Disclosing and identifying specific needs in the Middle East and North Africa

Training Module, Part 1:
Introduction to disclosure



Center for Human Rights,
Gender and Migration

INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



MENA

Community
Protection
Network

supported by



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



Lesson Objectives

- ▶ Introduce training module
- ▶ Develop familiarity with concepts of disclosure v. identification of specific protection and support needs
- ▶ Review 2020 research findings
- ▶ Discuss strategies for diverse migration / service provision contexts



Training Module Overview

Lesson 1: Introduction to disclosure

Lesson 2: Understanding specific needs and international protection

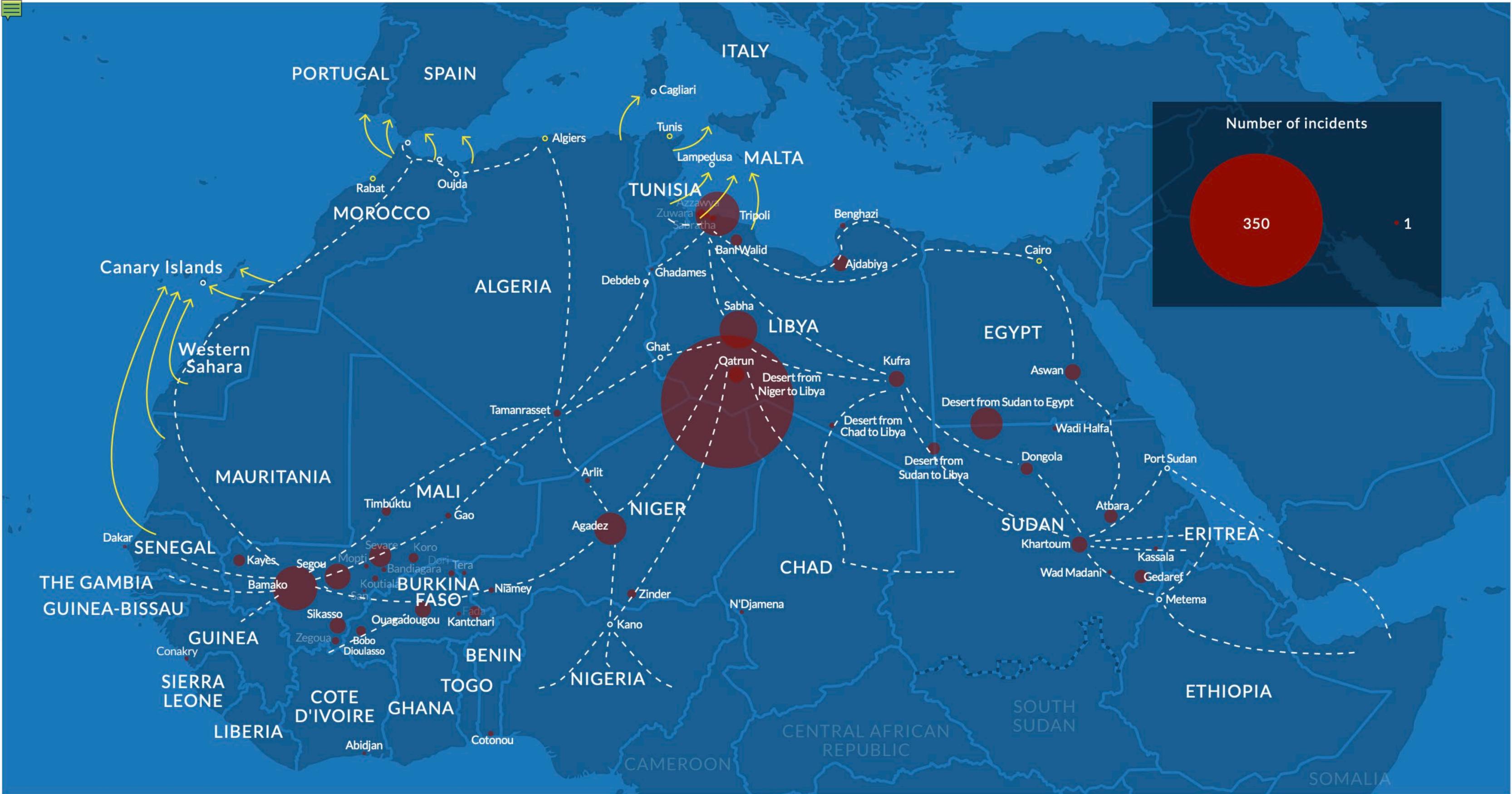
Lesson 3: Victim-centered, trauma-informed care

Lesson 4: Outreach and community- based approaches

Lesson 5: Strengthening referral and coordination

Key concepts

From a 2020 study by the UNHCR and the Center for Human Rights, Gender and Migration at Washington University (USA)



UNHCR, "On this journey, no one cares if you live or die," July 2020 (pp. 18-19).

Mixed Movements

- “Mixed movements” means that people are crossing borders for many different reasons (eg, refugees fleeing persecution, victims of trafficking, migrants in search of work or a better life).
- People in “mixed movements” have a variety of legal statuses (eg, temporary visa, student visa, asylum seeker, irregular status) and different vulnerabilities (eg, as a result of gender, age, physical disability). Their statuses and vulnerabilities may change over time.
- People in “mixed movements” are often exposed to human rights violations before, during, or after their journeys.
- People in “mixed movements” often travel along the same routes and use similar methods of travel (eg, irregular travel with assistance of smugglers), regardless of their reasons for leaving.



**Who travels in mixed movements?
How can we find those in need of protection?**

Disclosure v. Identification

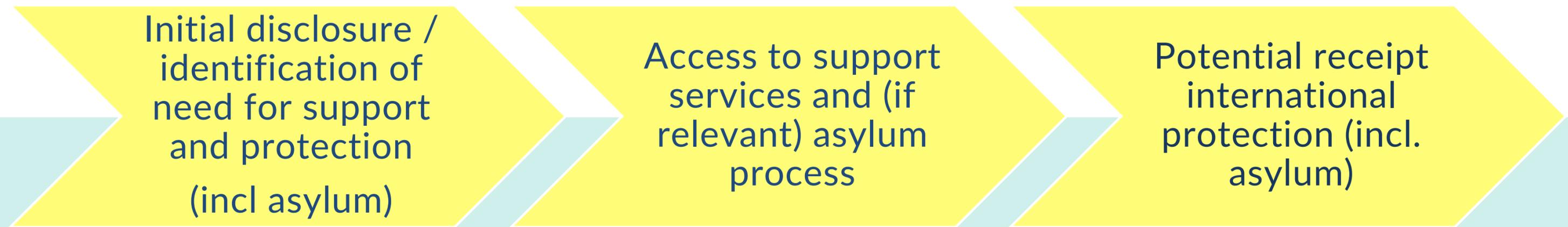
Disclosure

- Revelation of something unknown or hidden about oneself.
- Often refers to secret or stigmatized information.
- Can be influenced by capability, opportunity, and/or motivation to disclose.

Identification

- Organization's proactive effort to detect a condition, experience, or a need among a population of concern.
- Eg, through screening tool, direct questioning, observation.

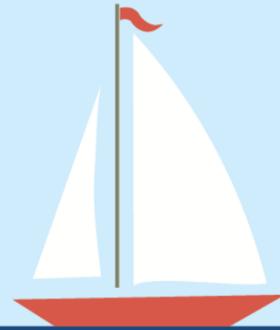
Importance of disclosure, identification



Note: Disclosure may deepen in time, with increased trust and survivor-centered, trauma-informed interactions.

DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTION NEEDS

A deepening process



1

Individual expresses general need for protection or desire to access the asylum process.

- Says, "I am afraid of going home."
- Says, "I just got here and I need help."

2

Individual presents information indicating nature of possible asylum claim or protection need.

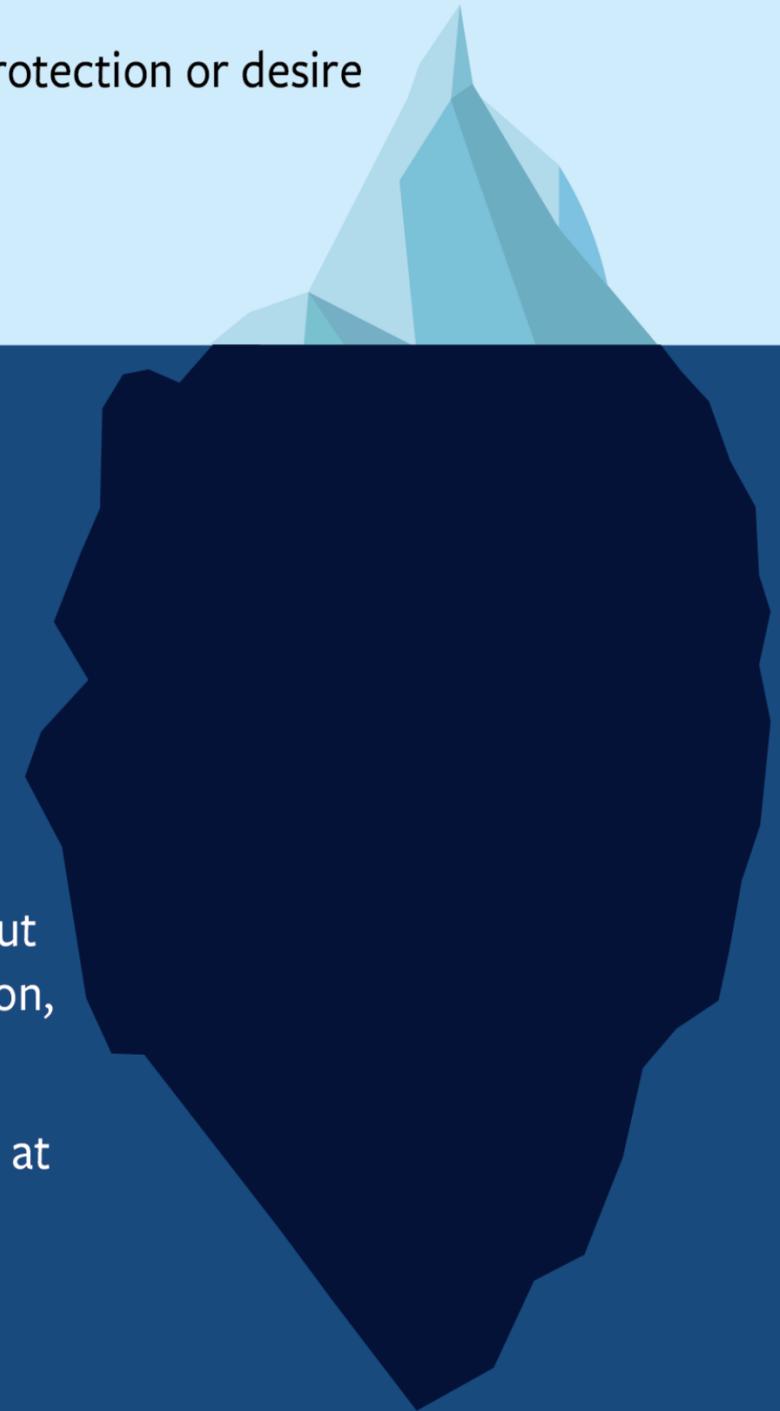
- Describes past harm in intake interview.
- Shares fears with community-based outreach worker.

3

Individual deepens disclosure by offering greater detail about the nature, severity, motives, and impacts of past persecution, current harm, or fear of future harm.

- Narrates history of past persecution in considerable detail at eligibility interview.
- Provides complete and credible responses to direct questioning about experiences of trafficking or specific fear of trafficker.

Disclosure: A deeper look



Research findings:

**Barriers to disclosure of specific needs in
North Africa's mixed movements**

Research

- 2020 Study by the Center for Human Rights, Gender and Migration at Washington University (USA).
- Qualitative research, interviews with 47 organizations and state actors in Morocco, Tunisia, and at regional level.
- Objective: Identify barriers to identification and disclosure of international protection needs in North Africa's mixed movement context.



INVISIBLE NEEDS

DISCLOSURE, SUPPORT, AND PROTECTION
IN NORTH AFRICA'S MIXED MOVEMENT

2021

Barriers (individual-level)

- Psychological state / impacts of trauma;
- Lack of self-identification as victim;
- Social norms and stigma (about nature of protection need OR about applying for asylum);
- Fear and mistrust of individuals and institutions;
- Lack of awareness / information about asylum rights or processes;
- Language barriers.

“Some violence can be forgotten by victims who are traumatized – those forgotten details can affect the response they receive for asylum.”

Barriers (systemic)

- Insufficient legal and institutional framework for international protection;
- Inconsistent training / capacity by state & non-state actors;
- Lack of strong referral and coordination system;
- Distance from UNHCR / service providers;
- Fear of law enforcement due to irregular status;
- Information gaps re: asylum procedures, complicated forms;
- Insufficient legal assistance, interpretation.



Barriers (specific vulnerabilities)

Victims of trafficking

- Fear of danger to self or family;
- Inability to leave trafficking network, including due to lack of safe shelter;
- Limited legal and institutional linkages between asylum and anti-trafficking efforts.

“[A lady] works in the restaurants, working 24 hours without money or rest ... and she is being raped by the supervisor. She can't go to the police because she doesn't have papers. She prefers this life on the streets. If you ask her why she doesn't go to the police: she will say, sure, I could go to the police, but then where will I go? It is better for me to stay here, have shelter.”

Barriers (specific vulnerabilities)

Children, including unaccompanied children

- Mistrust of / lack of confidence in authorities (including facilities for unaccompanied children);
- Lack of awareness of rights;
- Vulnerable to exploitation and becoming “invisible”.

“[There was a] young student photographer working w/ refugee families, photographing young adolescent men, chatting & hearing their stories. They had come in w/ a single mom, and seemed to be common experience that mom had had to be raped to cross borders ... So difficult for them to see the police over and over again because it reminded them of their mothers and what they had to go through.”

Barriers (specific vulnerabilities)

LGBTIQ+ Individuals

- Interpretation (eg, use of negatively-connotated words, fear of being “outed”);
- Lack of awareness of option of claiming asylum due to sexual orientation and gender identity (for LGBTIQ+ individuals);
- Fear of prosecution in host country for sexual orientation.

Paraphrased: A woman wanted a residency permit but withdrew her request when she learned she would need to speak to police as part of process. It turns out she was a lesbian and this was a crime in [host country], so she feared police. This has implications for her protection generally.

Barriers (specific vulnerabilities)

HIV+ individuals, individuals involved in survival sex

- Fear of stigmatization, prosecution.

“Many who do sex work don’t talk about it. Minors doing survivor sex work in [host country] are not communicating about it. No follow up, no medical checkups. Horrible situations where minors had HIV because no one was following up. [If] HIV positive, people don’t say this because afraid of being shamed or discriminated against, but this could be another factor in their protection.”

Research findings: Strategies

Existing strategies

- Establish hotlines to provide information about protection and referrals
- Adopt “case management” approach to provide ongoing care and follow-up
- Engage community-based agents and protection assistants, including for different ethnic / nationality groups
- Utilize social media (WhatsApp, Facebook) for community-liaising, information campaigns about support and protection (but maintain confidentiality)
- Provide psychological support / legal assistance before, during, after access to asylum process (eg, legal aid from supervised law students)
- Provide trainings / printed guidance for border patrol & police officers re: rights of refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants
- Train service providers re: asylum eligibility and processes; trauma-informed care; working with children, trafficked persons, GBV survivors, LGBTIQ+ individuals (“Train the trainers” approach)
- Develop national referral mechanism, inter-organizational SOPs

Covid-19-specific: Barriers, strategies

Barriers

- Emptied public spaces and lockdown enforcement → Increased visibility for certain foreigners, fear of arrest / deportation;
- Referrals and service provision restricted during lockdowns; in-person services still limited capacity;
- Asylum interviews suspended and internal travel restricted.

Emerging strategies

- Remote service provision / case management;
- Use of social media for information sharing and connection;
- Remote registration and first contact interview with UNHCR for asylum-seekers.

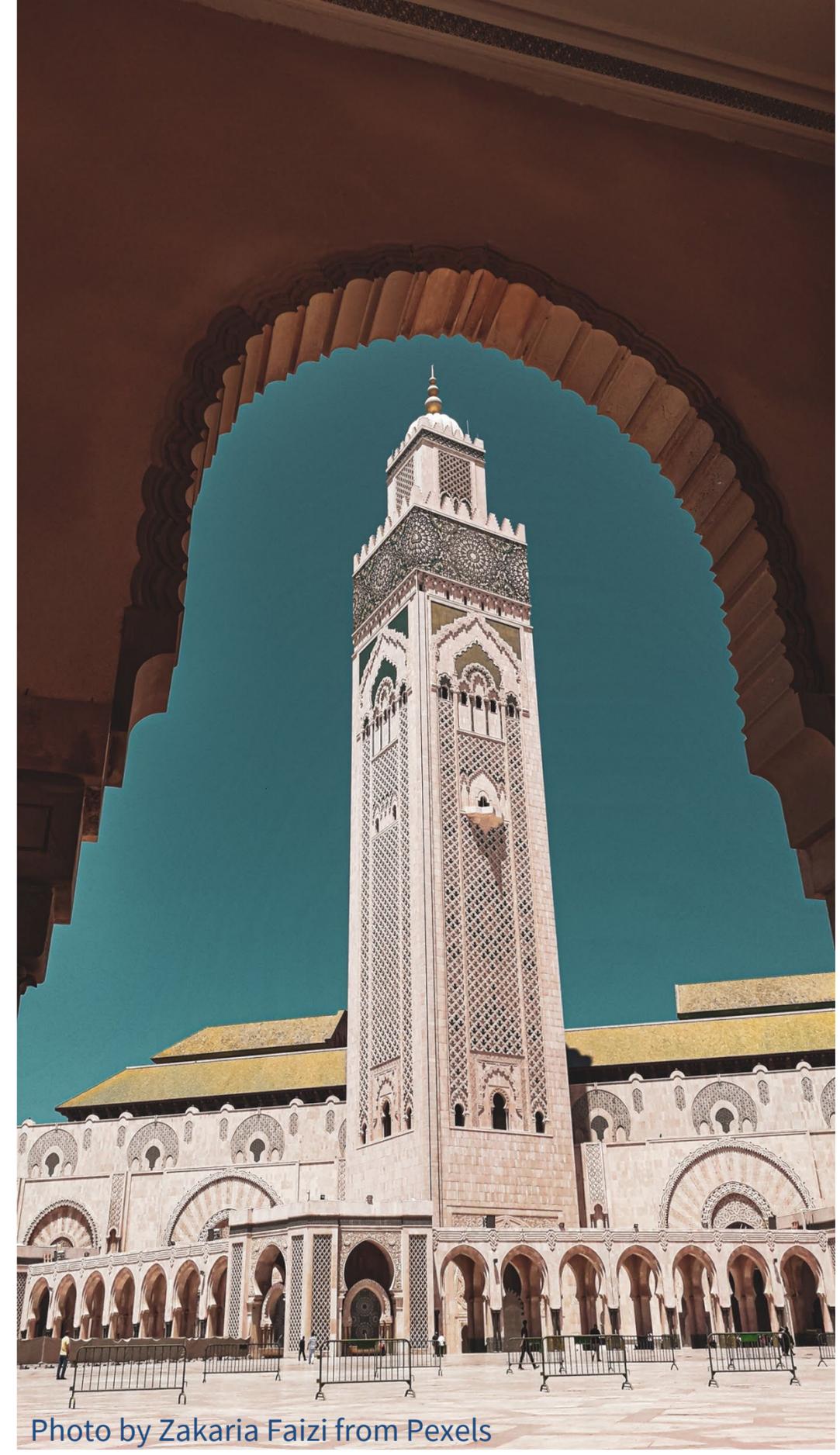


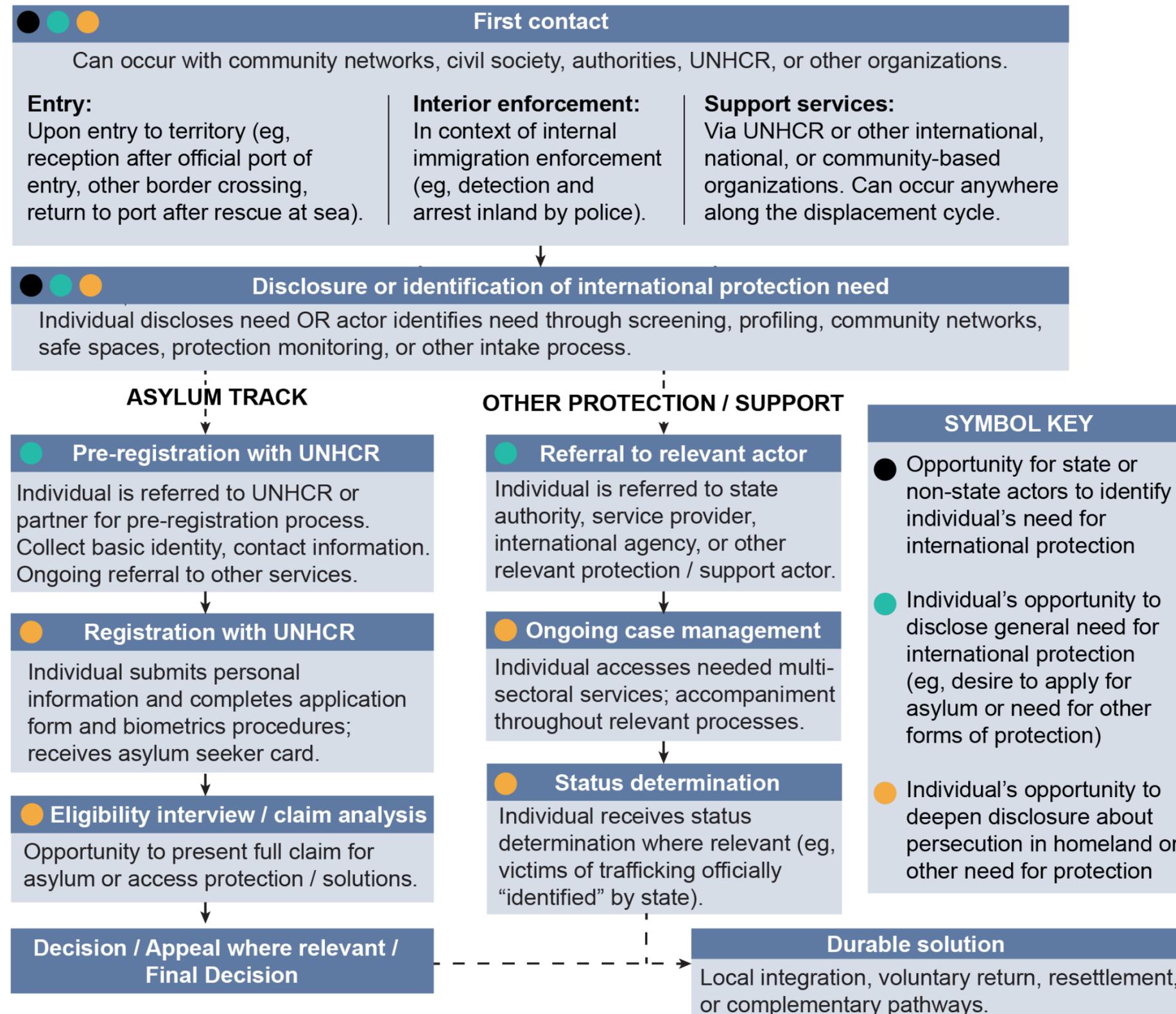
Photo by Zakaria Faizi from Pexels

Research takeaways

Disclosure and identification

- Mixed movements in North Africa pose challenges to both disclosure and identification of international protection needs.
- Supporting disclosure entails addressing a person's motivation, capability, and opportunity to reveal or explain their protection needs.
- Actors can improve identification via trainings, profiling or screening, engaging community agents, and strengthening coordination and collaboration.
- Having clear legal frameworks on refugee and asylum seekers' rights would clarify and strengthen state actors' roles, while improving authorities' ability to identify asylum seekers and refer them to UNHCR.

Disclosure & Identification in Protection Processes



Trafficking and refugee protection

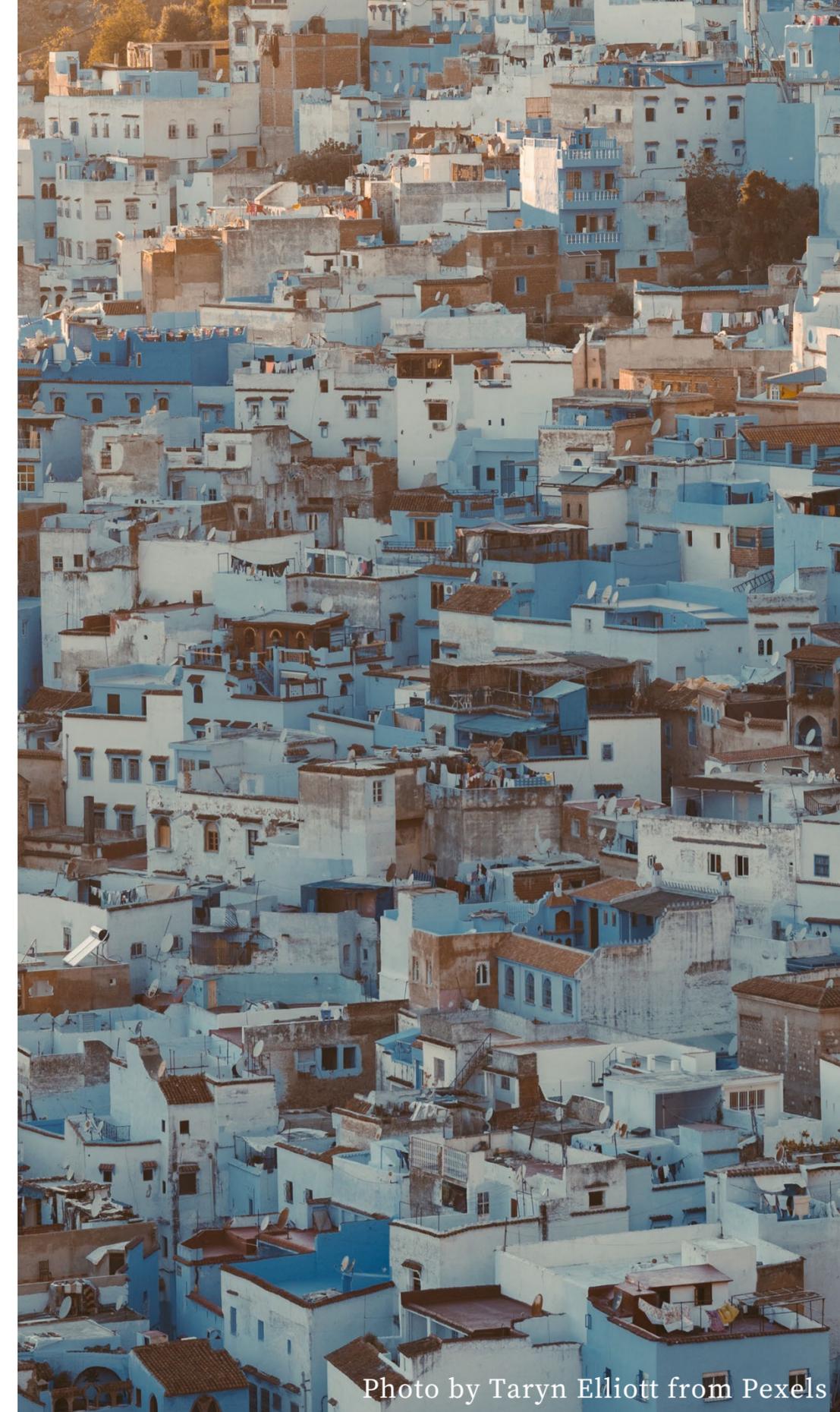
- Some victims of trafficking may be eligible for refugee protection, such as those who faced or fear persecution linked to one or more protected grounds of the Refugee Convention in their home countries.
- However, few access this protection (eg, difficulty of escape, fear of retaliation, lack of safe shelter or on-going protection; lack of awareness of rights).
- UNHCR has additional interest in ensuring that persons of concern do not fall prey to trafficking in host country.
- Nature of much trafficking (conducted by members of victim's community) can create fear of own community members, which may require different outreach and support strategies.
- Strengthened coordination between asylum and anti-trafficking systems would enhance victims' access to refugee protection.

For more, see: <https://icat.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1461/files/publications/icat-ib-03-v.2.pdf>



Importance of community-based approaches

1. Help disseminate accurate information about asylum (eligibility, benefits, process, where to find assistance);
2. Help build and sustain trust between service providers and the mixed movement populations they serve;
3. Help improve chances of identification and disclosure of international protection needs - particularly among new arrivals.
4. Community-based partners can provide accompaniment throughout referral process, including to UNHCR.
5. Examples: engagement of community liaisons from specific groups; creating digital community space through social media; facilitation of regular community-based activities.



Typology and Discussion

DISCLOSURE OF SPECIFIC NEEDS: A PROPOSED TYPOLOGY

TYPE OF DISCLOSURE	SAMPLE SCENARIOS	COMMONLY IMPLICATED SERVICE PROVIDERS	APPROACHES, CONSIDERATIONS
SELF-MOTIVATED DISCLOSURE	Survivor has independent reason or intent to disclose their needs, regardless of environment or provider action.	Survivor needs a pregnancy test at a medical clinic after rape experience. Survivor requests referral to a lawyer to discuss asylum.	Healthcare providers (medical, psychosocial support) Law enforcement officers Shelter staff <i>Note: All providers should be prepared for self-initiated disclosure, however rare it may be.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Capacity to give psychological first aid. <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitization of entire staff, including survivor-centered and rights-based approaches. <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential interview space. <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential and updated referral, information management, and case management systems. <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity of gender, ethnicity, age, language, and sexual orientation / identity on staff, to extent possible.
ENABLED DISCLOSURE	Survivor is encouraged to disclose due to supportive environment or provider's indication of receptivity.	Survivor who feels welcome at migrant shelter confides in kitchen staff. Survivor engaged in group therapy activities eventually feels comfortable revealing individual experience or needs.	Healthcare providers (medical, psychosocial support) Law enforcement officers Shelter staff <i>Note: All providers should aim to create a safe, enabling environment for those wishing to discuss individual experiences or support needs.</i> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>All of the above, plus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Creation of safe, welcoming facility. <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement of migrants and refugees in routine activities, chores, etc. to create rapport and predictable opportunities to speak freely. <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of diverse interaction opportunities, including group activities (know-your-rights trainings, group therapy, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Display of posters and other materials about available support services.
GUIDED OR ELICITED DISCLOSURE	Survivor discloses in response to providers' direct questioning about past traumatic experience, which may include direct or indirect questioning about past experiences.	Survivor responds to UNHCR staff or lawyer's question about harms fled in home country, asked to determine asylum eligibility. Police are contacted about a recent experience of violence and must question survivor, witnesses.	Healthcare providers (medical, psychosocial support) Law enforcement officers Legal aid attorneys Refugee status determination actors <i>Note: Most providers should refrain from direct questioning unless there is a clear need or benefit to the survivor and provider staff are sufficiently trained.</i> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>All of the above, plus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Creation of safe, welcoming facility. <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing skills-development re: working with survivors of trauma. <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement of, or ready access to, expert on trafficking, GBV, gender, persons with disabilities, other vulnerable groups, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Prepared explanation as to why certain questions will be asked, and with what assurances of confidentiality. <input type="checkbox"/> Clear documentation procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Safe, confidential data management systems. <input type="checkbox"/> Access to trained interpreters.



Discussion: kinds of disclosure

- Have you handled situations of “self-motivated” disclosure of specific support & protection needs? What happened and how did you respond?
- How are you helping to “enable” disclosure of specific support & protection needs? How is your organization contributing to creating an “enabling” environment?
- Is it your responsibility to “guide” or “elicit” disclosure of specific protection and support needs? If yes, why? And how do you do this? If no, what do you do if you suspect someone has protection needs that are beyond your mandate to address?



Closing and Thanks



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