The CENTER for VICTIMS of TORTURE

Cost-effectiveness of Specialized Mental Health Services for Refugee Trauma Survivors

The Center for Victims of Torture specializes in trauma-informed work with torture survivors, including refugees and forced migrants. CVT conducted research to determine the benefit of adding CVT services, which include psychotherapy and case management, to usual healthcare. The additional CVT services for Karen refugees with major depression resulted in significant improvements in depression, PTSD, anxiety, pain symptoms and social functioning. An article detailing results is these publications:

Vukovich, M., Esala, J.,et al. Cost Savings from Integrating Behavioral Health in Primary Care: A Pragmatic Randomized Control Trial with Karen Refugees. J Immigrant Minority Health (2025). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-025-01806-7

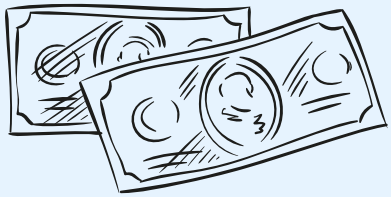
Northwood AK, Vukovich MM, et al. Intensive psychotherapy and case management for Karen refugees with major depression in primary care: a pragmatic randomized control trial. BMC Fam Pract. (2020). doi: 10.1186/s12875-020-1090-9.

The study also examined the cost effectiveness of adding CVT services to usual healthcare.

SHORTER HOSPITAL STAYS

Those receiving the CVT services spent 1.5 fewer days on average in the hospital and were healthier at discharge.

$8,000 LESS IN INPATIENT COSTS



The average inpatient cost savings for those receiving the additional CVT services was $8,000 per person.

These findings highlight the importance of adding CVT services (specifically, psychotherapy and case management) to standard healthcare for refugee patients to improve overall wellbeing and reduce healthcare costs.

Data suggest CVT services resulted in better mental and physical health. CVT services may have played a crucial role in encouraging access and engagement with preventative healthcare services.