

**Course Title: War, Collective Trauma and Mental Health in the South Asian Context**

**Course Code:** PSY-829

**Credit Hours:** 2

**Pre-requisites:** Adult Psychopathology, Research Methods, Comparative Therapies

**Course Description**

This course examines the impact of war, terrorism, migration, and climate change on mental health, focusing on Pakistan and the South Asian region. It covers displacement, socio-economic challenges, refugee–host dynamics, and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) contributing to psychopathology. Emphasis is placed on trauma-informed care and the evolving role of mental health practitioners in advocacy, policy-making, and community resilience in contexts shaped by conflict, terrorism, and environmental crises.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the psychological consequences of war, terrorism, migration, displacement and other socioeconomical stressors in Pakistan and South Asia.
2. Identify socio-economic and environmental stressors leading to psychopathology across the lifespan.
3. Apply trauma-informed care frameworks in war, refugee, and disaster-affected populations.
4. Demonstrate culturally competent approaches to advocacy and policy engagement for mental health in conflict and climate-vulnerable settings.
5. Critically evaluate global, regional, and local strategies for addressing trauma in war-stricken and climate-stressed economies.

## Weekly Breakdown

### Week 1–2: *Foundations*

- Understanding trauma in collective violence, war, and terrorism
- Historical and political context of conflict in Pakistan/South Asia
- Theories: developmental trauma, socio-ecological models.

### Week 3–4: *Migration, Refugees, and Displacement*

- Refugee crises in Pakistan (Afghan, Rohingya, IDPs due to terrorism/floods)
- Refugee–host community tensions: cultural, economic, and political dimensions
- Comparative case studies

### Week 5–6: *Socio-economic Stressors*

- Poverty, unemployment, and disrupted education
- Socioeconomic change as a multiplier of displacement and violence (floods, drought, resource conflict)
- Intersection of gender, class, and vulnerability in fragile states

### Week 7–8: *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)*

- ACEs in war and changing economic contexts
- Child soldiers, loss, neglect, and trauma
- Psychopathologies: PTSD, anxiety, depression, conduct disorders

### Week 9–10: *Adult Psychopathology*

- Complex PTSD, depression, suicidality
- Somatization, personality disorders in conflict and displacement
- Transgenerational trauma

### Week 11–12: *Trauma-Informed Care*

- Principles of trauma-informed practice in war and disaster settings
- Psychological First Aid, community-based resilience models
- Role of NGOs, UNHCR, WHO, and local initiatives

- Tele-counseling and low-cost interventions in conflict/climate-affected areas

### **Week 13: Advocacy, and Mental Health**

- Advocacy: integrating mental health into socio economic policy
- Mental health practitioners' role in disaster preparedness and resilience

### **Week 14: Policy and Practitioner Engagement**

- Global frameworks (Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, WHO MHPSS guidelines)
- National and regional policy gaps in Pakistan
- Practitioner roles in community mobilization, awareness campaigns, and policy lobbying

### **Week 15–16: Applied Seminar and Case Presentations**

- Case presentations of war/climate trauma survivors
- Simulation exercises (advocacy campaigns, disaster response role-plays)
- Reflective discussion on ethical dilemmas in trauma and practice

### **Teaching–Learning Strategies**

- Lectures with case vignettes
- Guest speakers (NGO workers, trauma therapists, climate advocates)
- Reflective journals and advocacy projects
- Field visits (IDP/refugee programs, climate-affected communities if feasible)

### **Assessment Methods**

- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Case Study/Field Reflection: 20%
- Advocacy Project/Presentation: 20%
- Final Exam: 40%

### **Suggested Textbooks & Readings**

#### **Core Texts**

1. Herman, J. (2015). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. Basic Books.
2. Miller, K. E., & Rasco, L. M. (2004). *The Mental Health of Refugees: Ecological Approaches to Healing and Adaptation*. Routledge.

3. Silove, D., Ventevogel, P., & Rees, S. (2017). *The contemporary refugee crisis: an overview of mental health challenges*. *World Psychiatry*, 16(2), 130–139.
4. Clayton, S., Manning, C., Krygman, K., & Speiser, M. (2017). *Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance*. APA & ecoAmerica.

#### **Supplementary/Regional References**

- UNHCR Pakistan. (2023). *Afghan Refugees in Pakistan: Statistics and Reports*.
- Saeed, K., & Gater, R. (2017). *Trauma, terrorism and mental health in Pakistan*. *International Review of Psychiatry*.
- UNICEF (2022). *Adverse Childhood Experiences in South Asia: Regional Report*.
- Khan, M. N., et al. (2022). *Climate change and mental health in Pakistan: Emerging evidence and policy gaps*. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences*.