January 19-25, 2025 El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

Borderland Peace Camp

Mennonite Central Committee





Welcome to the Borderland Peace Camp!

We are very excited for you to join the Borderland Peace Camp and participate in a week of learning and growing. This peace camp will focus on the topic of immigration on the US/Mexico border. We will have several sessions where we will both listen to experts talk about the topic of immigration, here personal stories about immigration, visit organizations that work with immigrants on both the US and Mexico side as well as discuss with each other what we are learning and what approaches to migration we should take as Christians.

We invite you to be engaged and participatory during this week, bringing your curiosity to better understand the issues, respect for situations you might not fully understand, and willingness to engage each other as we learn together.

What we will explore at this peace camp:

Theological response to migration and hospitality: As people of faith, how should we understand our theological and spiritual responsibilities towards immigrants in our midst

Root causes of migration: What are regional and global dynamics that are causing human migration today? How can a peacebuilding lens help us understand these root causes?

Current realties: What are the conditions and experiences migrants face when they get to the border? How does identity and our perception of "strangers" have an impact on migrants at the border? How can we understand this experience from a trauma and resilience lens?

*On-the-ground wor*k: How are local community-based organizations and churches accompanying migrants navigate a volatile context? How can a peacebuilding lens help us understand the impact of these interventions?

Peace Camp Folder

In this folder you will find the schedule for the week as well as descriptions of some of the activities we will be doing this week. Our hope is that what you experience this week you will be able to share with others when you return to your home communities and churches. It's important that after a learning experience such as this we share with others what we have learned and experienced. This experience makes us ambassadors of the knowledge we have recently acquired. As ambassadors we must let others know what we have learned and hold that knowledge with the respect that it deserves. Each of you will have a responsibility going forward to share this experience with others. We hope this folder will aid in that process so that you can replicate some of the activities you have done here. If you have any questions about the materials in this folder, please let us know.



Borderland Peace Camp Agenda: February 19 – 25, 2025

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:30am		Breakfast at	Breakfast at	Breakfast at	Breakfast	Breakfast at	Breakfast at
		lodging	lodging	lodging	at lodging	lodging	lodging
8:30am		Morning	Morning	Morning	Morning	Morning	Early group
		Reflection –	Reflection -	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	traveling to
		Saulo	Abraham		- Jacinda		airport
Sess 1:		Global	Presentation	People on	Leave for	MCC LACA,	
9:00 –		migration,	of Abara and	the Move	Juarez,	Mexico and	
10:30am		root causes	context		MX	US	
						Immigration	
						Work	
Break:		10:30 – 11:00					Later group
Sess 2:		Immigration	Breaking	Trauma and	Visit with	MCC Young	traveling to
11:00am		101	down	safety	Somos	adult	airport
-			walls/building		Uno Por	programming	
12:30pm			bridges		Juarez –		
					MCC		
Lunch		At Aboro 10			partner	At Abara	
Lunch		At Abara - 12:	:30pm – 2:00pm		In Juarez	At Abara	
Sess 3:	Afternoon	Christian	Visit in El	Peaceful	Visiting	What's Next?	
2 –	flights	Hospitality	Paso	Practices	an		
3:30pm	arriving				immigrant shelter		
Break:	Going to	3:30 –			Sheller		
Brouk.	lodging	4:00pm					
Sess 4:	from airport	Outing		Outing		Closing	
4 –							
5:30pm							
Dinner:	Dinner	At Abara	Eat out	At Abara	In Juarez	At Abara	
6-7pm							
Evening	Orientation,	ТВА	Art Reflection	ТВА	Return	ТВА	
Activity	intros,		- Isaac		7:00pm		
	community						
	agreements						

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Our Hosts

Abara House at La Hacienda

Abara means "ford" in a number of semitic languages, signifying a natural place where a river is shallow enough to cross. Our desire is to cultivate a space where people move in humility across divides. Abara House is more than a place. It is a pathway toward understanding and change.

Abara is rooted on the U.S./Mexico border. As a peace-building center, Abara hosts educational border trips and offers holistic support alongside displaced communities, fostering connection and understanding in a polarized world.

Addresses:

Abara Apartments 1228 Wyoming Ave. El Paso, TX 79922

Abara Hacienda 1720 West Paisano Drive El Paso, TX 79922

Lodging and group dynamics

We will be staying in a combination of three cabins divided by gender. The sleeping arrangements are such that **you will be sharing a room with other participants**. Aside from there not being enough space for everyone to have their own room, we hope that sharing rooms together will be an opportunity to connect with each other and build a learning environment. We also know it is important for people's space and privacy to be respected, and we ask that this will be acknowledged by everyone in the group.

During the week we will be spending a lot of time with each other. While we hope this to be an engaging experience, we also know it is important to be able to step away from the group from time to time to be able to recharge on your own. We want to respect this as well. Please let us know when you need alone time to recharge.

If you have questions or concerns about this, please let me know.

It's always good to check the weather online before travelling. At this time, we expect temperatures to range from highs in the 60s to lows in the 30s at night. Please pack accordingly.



Things you might need with you each day

- All necessary travel documents! If you indicated in your registration that you have passport, please bring that with you along with any other US ID that you have.
- Something to write with and for taking notes
- Comfortable / layered clothing to adapt to changing winter temperatures throughout the day – El Paso will be lows in 20sF(-5C) and highs in 40s(4C) or 50s (12C)
- Comfortable shoes for walking
- Water bottle
- Hat and sunscreen for when we do some day trips
- Toiletries and medicines that you need for your personal care
- Personal snacks for times when you need a pick-me-up. We'll have some available, but it will be important that you have what you need to care for yourself
- Download application of WhatsApp for communication with the entire group

Resources and things to be mindful of

As many of you know, immigration on the US/Mexico border has been and will continue to be a sensitive issue. We are mindful that the first day of the camp, January 20, is the inauguration of the president of the United States. Given the attention that presidentelect Donald Trump has given immigration, we will be aware of changing dynamics regarding immigration in the United States. We also want to remember that January 20 is Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This is a good reminder for us that in the midst of struggle there are people working for a better society. This camp will be an opportunity to deepen your understanding of how we can address immigration in such a way that makes us a better society.

Crossing the border

We will be crossing the border into Juarez on one of those days. It will be important to have your personal ID on you at that time such as your passport for those of you that have one. It will also be important to keep in mind that once we cross the border, we will be in another country with different customs and ways of living. Sometimes the things we see in other countries can feel uncomfortable or shocking to us. We ask that you go with an open mind to embrace things that are new to you. At the same time, we are also concerned about your safety. Experiencing discomfort and newness does not mean that you need be unsafe. We will always be traveling with trusted people and ask that you stay with the group at all times and follow the cultural cues that are provided for us.



Resources

We encourage you to check out the list of resources below. Some of the links are to partners with MCC while others provide information about some of the partners we will be interacting with in the area and some other links for exploring the topic of immigration. See the list below:

1) Abara – abara.com

As explained above Abara will be hosting us during the week. Abara's mission is to "inspire connections beyond borders through mutual understanding, education, and meaningful action in pursuit of narrative, systems, and personal change." You can explore their website on issues of <u>Global Migration</u> to learn more about immigration issues at https://www.abara.org/global-realities.

2) Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center - <u>https://www.las-americas.org/</u> MCC partners with this advocacy center in El Paso to provide high quality legal services to low-income immigrants and advocate for their human rights

3) Somos Uno por Juarez – *We Are One for Juarez* - <u>https://www.instagram.com/p/DEVrSvfvPZg/</u>

MCC partners with this shelter network that supports 13 shelters across Juarez, Mexico

4) National Immigration Forum Resource Directory

https://immigrationforum.org/article/border-resources-directory/

5) Interactive journey to the US/Mexico border:

https://immigrationforum.org/article/journey-to-the-u-s-southern-border/

- 6) An article about migrating through the Darien Gap -<u>https://unocha.exposure.co/migration-through-the-darien-jungle-7-things-to-</u> know-about-the-perilous-trek
- 7) UNHCR Refugee Statistics https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics

Circle Process

What Is a Circle?¹

A circle is a gathering that is characterized by thoughtful preparation, powerful questions, and an egalitarian structure. Members of a group, team, movement, or community are all comfortably seated in a circle. Everyone is invited to participate and all voices are considered equally important. The structure is simple with a beginning (opening, introductions, check-in), middle (speaking about the topic), and an end (closing and check-out). Conversation is structured around a series of questions. Every participant will have a chance to speak to each question without interruption. Circles use a talking piece which is passed from person to person, to designate who can speak at that moment—and who is listening (everyone else).

Circles are considered to be one of the oldest forms of group process. Indigenous and first peoples cultures from around the world used and continue to use circle processes to facilitate community conversations about important subjects.^[1] These processes have experienced a revival in modern cultures during the last 40 years and have been used in many applications.

Circles offer an inclusive and collaborative space for group members to share openly and build (or rebuild) trust with each other. Circles are generative in nature and can be used as a process for restorative (or transformative) justice, allowing a group to collectively respond to and heal from a rupture or transgression. Circles can also be used regularly to strengthen relationships within groups and provide members the space to understand each others' perspectives and why they might behave in a particular way.

Circles are particularly useful in social and political organizing as they are democratic and non-hierarchical. They challenge systems of oppression, cultivate a sense of belonging, and highlight the human interests at the heart of social change work.

Circles as restorative practices have always been a part of certain communities and cultures within the United States. They were also introduced in the judicial system, first within the sentencing process and soon across other parts of the judicial system. They have since been adopted in elsewhere, in schools, workplaces, and communities.^[2]

¹https://mediatorsbeyondborders.org/what-we-do/conflict-literacy-framework/circle-

 $process/\#:\sim: text=Members\%20 of\%20a\%20 group\%2C\%20 team, closing\%20 and\%20 check\%2D out$



Roles and components to a circle

- **Guardian/Circle Keeper** A person whose role is to track the tone of the conversation, maintain a safe and open space, and, with the help of others, call for pause when needed.
- **Talking Piece** An object held by the person who is currently able to speak. The talking piece generally has some significance to the Circle Keeper and/or members of the circle that will be passed around indicating who has the ability to speak.
- **Center Piece** An object placed in the middle of the circle that is used to focus the group and call them together. This object also generally has some significance to the Circle Keeper and/or members of the circle.
- Circles can also choose to have specific **timekeepers** to help keep the conversation moving and **scribes** to record decisions or other items important to the group.
- **Members of the circle** These are the people invited to be part of the circle. They should be sitting in a circle along with the Circle Keeper for the entirety of the process.

Steps to conducting a circle

- 1. **Opening**: Host/Guardian/Circle Keeper or convener shares the topic and intentions of the circle and opens with a ceremony or ritual.
 - Introduce the talking piece
 - Talk about time parameters (eg: time per person, timekeeper), if relevant.
 - Agree on the communication guidelines (Sample Guidelines Below)
- 2. **Question Rounds:** In each round, every participant will have the opportunity to answer the same question while all others listen attentively. The talking piece is passed around the circle. Participants can choose to pass, either in that moment or for a particular question.
 - Beginning Check-in A chance for participants to share names and relationship to the topic.
 - Questions about the topic A series of rounds each with a question that deepen understanding about the issue.
 - Check-out A chance for people to share their reflections on the circle.

3. Closing

- Reminder about any confidentiality agreements.
- Circle Keeper closes with closing ceremony.



To learn more about circles you can refer to *The Little Book of Circle Process* by Kay Pranis

https://livingjusticepress.org/product/little-book-of-circle-processes/

Biblical characters that lived through migration

Take some time to think through biblical characters that lived through some type of migration. Think of what their stories are and what they might have experienced. As you begin to remember who these characters and their stories are, make a list of them below with a brief description of where they were migrating and why they were migrating. Share what you have written with others in your group or in the larger discussion.

Character/People	Where was their migration?	Why did they migrate?

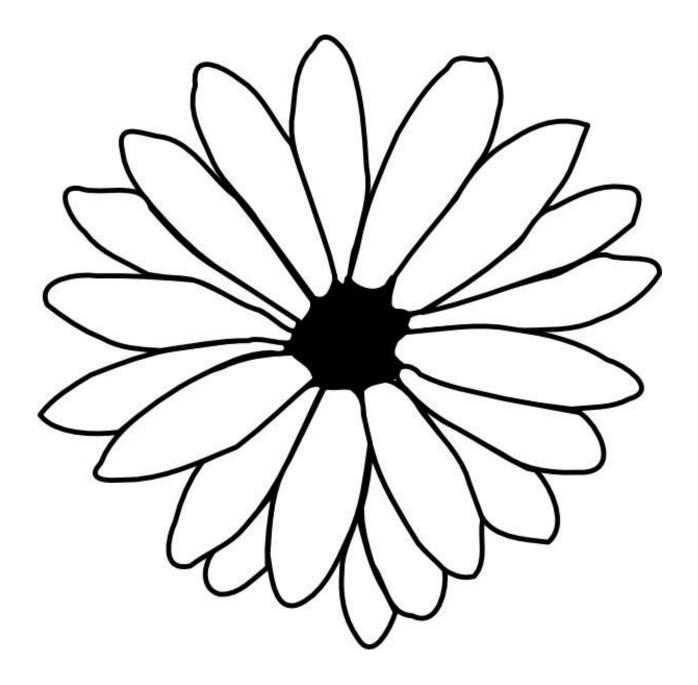
Identify Flower Activity²

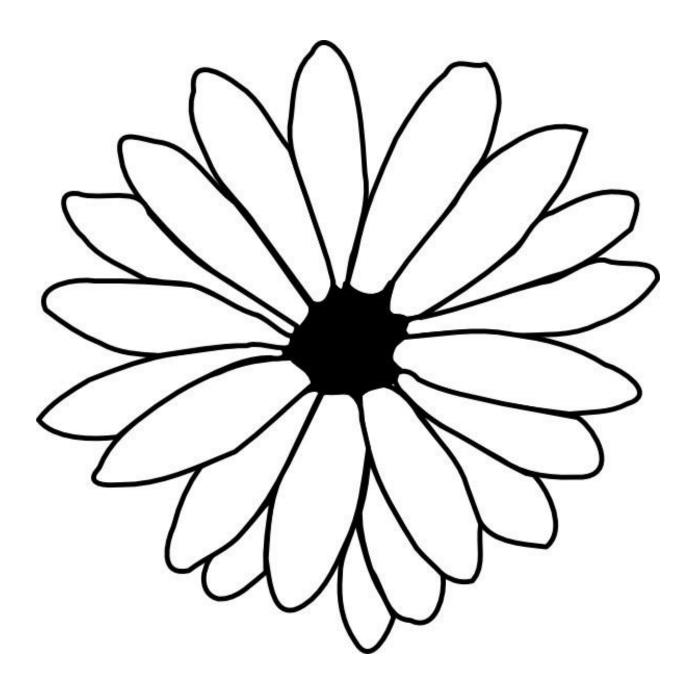
In order to grow our communities (family, church, neighborhood, country and more) into strong, vibrant groups filled with healthy difference and conflict, it is essential to begin by noticing our own individual patterns of recognition and categorization. How do we limit the dignity of other people's identity (consciously or unconsciously) due to our experience and context, their perspective on an issue, their lived experience or something else that makes us different? Each person is a beautiful and intricate creation of God, filled with complexity. Any action, anecdote or assertion made by another person is just a small window into the entirety of who they are. What do we see when we look at "the other?" What do others see when they look at us? Beginning to lean into the complexities of ourselves and others is a first step toward embodying the community of difference to which God calls us.

Directions

- 1. On the Identity daisy, take time to write different aspects of your identity on each petal of the flower. Write one descriptive word or phrase about yourself on each petal. This could be related to your profession, faith identity, political leanings, familial role, race or ethnicity, cultural background, general attributes or much more.
- 2. In small groups or pairs, reflect on the following questions:
 - Which aspects of your identities do you tend to bring to the front or foreground when in encounters with others, and which do you tend to hide? What benefit(s) do you gain and what is the cost(s) of doing this?
 - What aspects of your identity do you find repeated in much of your community? What identities, different than yours, are missing in your community?
 - Imagine going through different settings such as home, work, school, social/community circles, and church. What identities become more pronounced and less pronounced as you move through those different spaces? Are there identities in some spaces that are understood by others that are not visible in other spaces? Why might that by? How do you feel about that?

² Stoltzfus Buller, Peaceful Practices: A guide to healthy communication in conflict, 2021, p. 16





The Iceberg

The visual of an iceberg is often used to describe the nature of conflict. Above the surface, we only see a small percentage of the entire iceberg, while most of its mass lies under the water. Similarly, in conflict, only actions and stated positions are above the surface, creating the perception of incompatible goals. Under the surface, however, are all the assumptions, interests, feelings, needs, values and more. We need to focus on what matters by discovering what is below the surface. When we don't see the whole conflict, it is easy to spiral into destructive ways of handling it. We jump to conclusions quickly before working to discover what the actual problem is.³

Positions: What someone states they want in a conflict situation. Often these are statements that on the surface look very incompatible. If the people in conflict only engage each other based on their positions, the conflict can be ongoing and unresolved.

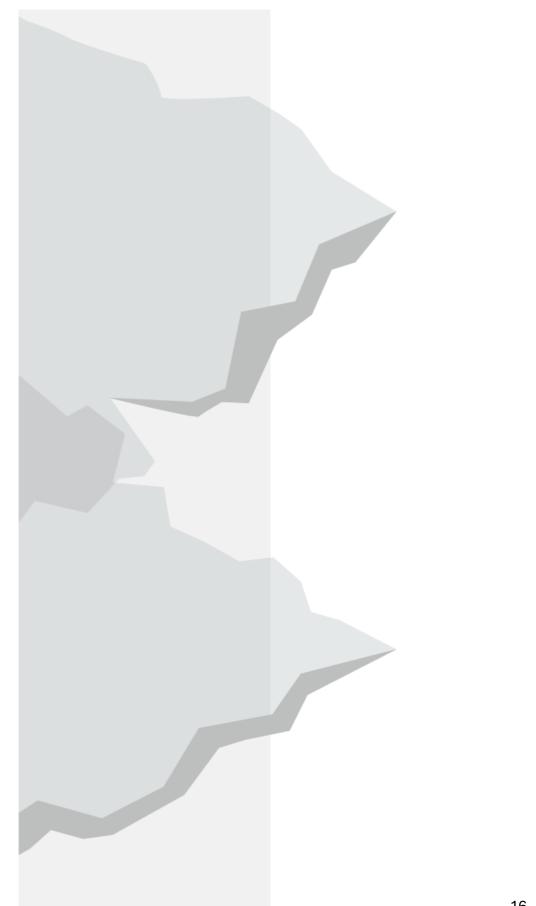
Needs: What are the actual non-negotiable aspects that a person in a conflict is trying to satisfy. Often these are not mentioned or stated and are not immediately known by the other person in conflict. Not meeting a need can push a person to continue to engage in an ongoing conflict. It is important that the two sides of a conflict understand each other's needs.

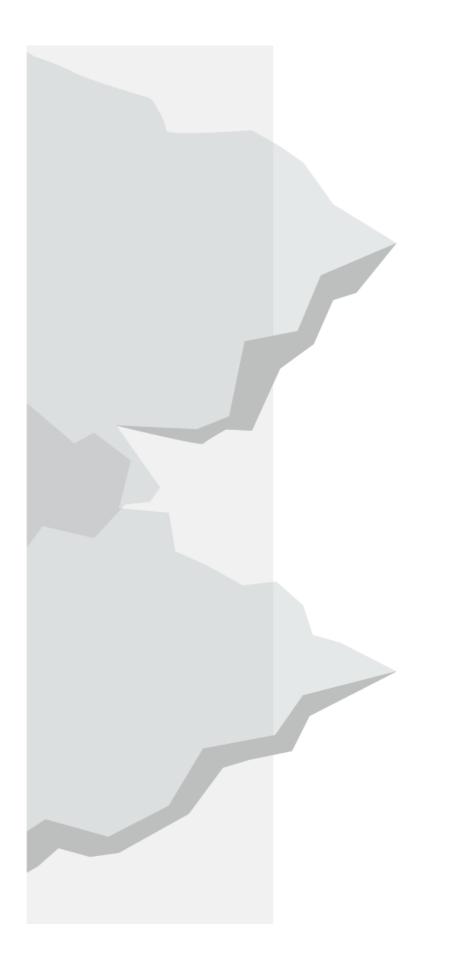
Activity:

On the following page you will see a blank set of two icebergs.

- 1. Fill in the positions that you observe, see and hear from people on different sides of an issue. Discuss how these positions are or are not compatible with each other and how they have manifested themselves in an ongoing conflict.
- 2. Now discuss why you think the people in the conflict have the positions they have.
 - What are their life experiences that influence their thinking?
 - How are they impacted by this issue?
 - What feelings might they experience around this issue and why?
 - What are the perceptions they have about people on the other side of the issue? What assumptions do they have as a result of these assumptions?
 - Fill out the underwater part of the iceberg with these feelings, perceptions and assumptions that you are identifying.
- 3. Based on your discussion above, identify the needs you think people on different sides of the issue have that are not being met by the current situation?
 - How are the needs you are identifying different from the positions that are more visible at the top of the iceberg.
 - List the needs that you are identifying in the underwater part of the iceberg
- 4. Once you have identified the needs on both icebergs, see if there are any needs and feelings that both sides share.
- Write those needs, feelings, etc in the part of the two icebergs that overlap with each other. *Reflect on what you have discovered and learned about the different positions*

³ Stoltzfus Buller, Peaceful Practices: A guide to healthy communication in conflict, 2021, p. 20





Addressing the Impact and Trauma of Migration AITM Seminar Handbook © 2024

This seminar workbook was created and produced by the AITM (Addressing the Impact and Trauma of Migration) team in collaboration with HDPI, Inc. AITM is a capacity-building program to reduce harm and enhance resilience.

HDPI, Inc is a not-for-profit, global network of specialists working on critical issues.

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For information on scheduling a seminar contact the authors at AddressingTraumaOfMigration@gmail.com

The content of this seminar workbook is based on STAR (Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience) concepts and framework from Eastern Mennonite University (<u>www.emu.edu/star</u>)

> and The Little Book of Trauma Healing by Carolyn Yoder, 2020. (www.peaceaftertrauma.com)



Acknowledgements

- Ruth and Timothy Stoltzfus Jost, financial support for 1st edition
- · Gabriela Leskur, graphic page 17

10 Sources of Trauma Definitions

Single event trauma: Intense one-time event, natural or human-caused with serious threat of harm or death (accident, assault, rape, death, hurricane).

On-going, continuous, cumulative trauma: Events without a clear beginning or end (bullying, neglect, abuse, detention, discrimination, deportation).

Secondary trauma: Experiencing trauma reactions as a result of witnessing (seeing or listening to another person's trauma experience which can happen to family, caregivers, etc. On-going secondary trauma can lead to **compassion fatigue**, a condition characterized by emotional and physical exhaustion leading to a diminished ability to empathize or feel compassion for others, often described as the negative cost of caring.

Ambiguous Loss: A condition of uncertainty following the disappearance of a person (leaving without goodbye) or following the psychological absence of a loved one (goodbye without leaving).

Participatory trauma: Result of active participation in causing harm to others through criminal acts (torture, abuse, abuse of power, terrorism) or in the line of duty (law enforcement, border patrol, military).

Dignity violations: Actions that disregard, diminish, humiliate or attack the inherent worth of individuals and groups (micro-aggressions, living under occupation, neglect, abuse).

Historical trauma: Native American, Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart (2003), describes this as the *cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations emanating from massive group trauma as such enslavement, colonialism, persecution or genocide of an ethnic, national or religious group.* Often silence surrounds these events.

Cultural trauma: When attempts are made to destroy part or all of a culture or people (treatment of Indigenous people around the world, Holocaust).

Structural trauma: Harm caused when social structures, policies and institutions deprive people of their land, culture, dignity, rights or ability to meet basic needs (poverty, corruption, racism, sexism).

Historical, cultural and structural trauma are in most cases the 'root causes' of migration.

Trauma can be passed from generation to generation if not addressed and healed.

¹² Ulysses Syndrome - Immigrant Syndrome

Root Causes of Migration

The majority of people migrate for reasons related to work, family and study – a high percentage do so seasonally, through legal means and to neighboring countries. Other people travel long distances and leave their homes, communities and countries for a range of compelling and sometimes tragic reasons, such as conflict, persecution and climate change. Those who have been displaced, such as refugees and internally displaced persons, comprise a relatively small percentage of all migrants, but they are often the most in need of assistance and support. The drivers of migration in the human experience continue to be the same as those of our ancestors thousands of years ago - work, family reunification, a better life, conflict and war, natural disasters, food security, refuge and protection.

The migration experience is a major life event or change. It brings with it seven mournings or losses that are specific to migration. These are the loss of:

- · Family and other loved ones
- Native language
- · Culture: customs, religion, values
- · Homeland: landscapes, colors, smells, tastes
- · Social status: roles, work, lifestyle, profession
- Ethnic group belonging
- · Physical safety risks: migration journey, deportation

As with any major life change these losses can impact an individual's mood and ability to function for a period of time. Frequently the stress of the migration experience is compounded by forced separation, dangers on the migration journey, a struggle to survive in the new home, and the duration of the extreme stressors for months or even years. It is important to recognize that responses to these conditions, such as depression and anxiety, are normal and not necessarily an indication of a physical or psychological illness. Dr Joseba Achotegui of the University of Barcelona has studied this and uses the term Ulysses Syndrome to describe the condition. It is named for the Greek hero Ulysses who spent 10 years on a long sea journey to return home.

REFLECTION

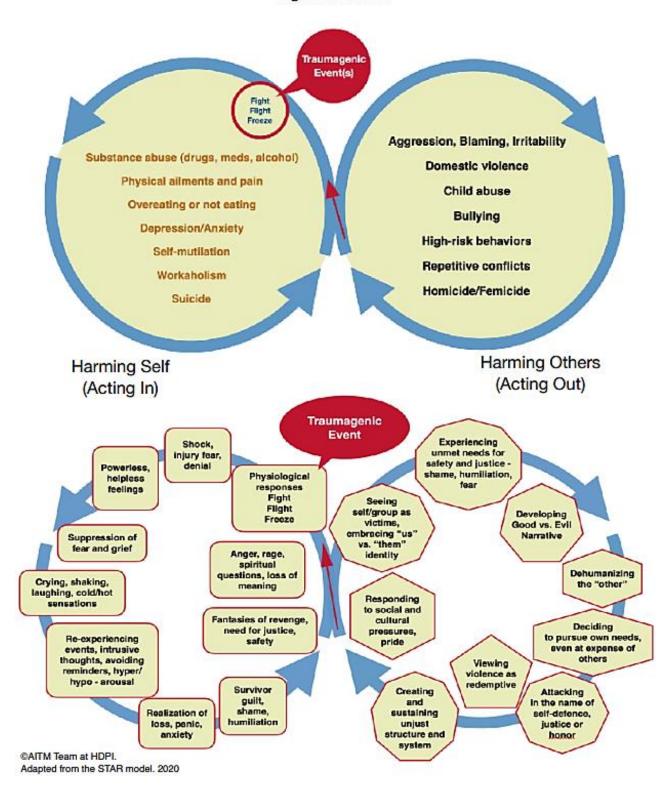
- · Identify root causes of migration in your context.
- · What are primary sorrows or losses you or others have experienced?
- · What additional stressors have made the migration experience more difficult?



Understanding the Ulysses Syndrome

23 Unaddressed Trauma and Cycles of Harm

Today's aggressors are often yesterday's victims Olga Botcharova



BUILDING RESILIENCE

Traveler, there is no path. The path is made by walking. Antonio Machado

Addressing trauma is a journey, a process, a different path for everyone. Everything we do on the journey to address trauma (releasing, recognizing, reconsidering, reconnecting) makes us more resilient. Resilience as we learned earlier is a term used in physics meaning the ability to bend but not break. For individuals and groups, it is the capacity to survive and bounce back in the midst of or after hardship and adversity and can be observed in all the stages of the migration experience.

Resilience is not just about being tough and enduring hard times, it is also about healthy power in order to respond in the midst of vulnerability and uncertainty. Human agency allows individuals and groups to have choices, ask questions, problem-solve and make changes. *Factors that contribute to resilience are listed below and represented by the different parts of the tree. The phrases following the factors (in bold) are helpful in identifying both personal and collective resilience.*

RESILIENCE FACTORS

Personal Characteristics: I am/we are (Trunk)
Social network: I have/we have (Roots)
Community Support and Resources (Branches)
Problem-solving skills: I can/we can (Leaves)
Strong belief/trust system: I believe/we trust (Sky)
Self-care: I do/we do (Soil)



REFLECTION

- Which resilience factors have helped you get to this point in your life?
- Are there factors you would like to increase? Strengthen?

What's Next?

Now that the week is over and you will be returning to your lives of work, studies, or some other new adventure. You will also be returning to your home communities and churches. The difference is that you are going back now as ambassadors of the learning and experiences you have had at the peace camp. As ambassadors we have an obligation to care for and hold these learnings and experiences in a such a way that it can impact our lives and the world beyond just the week of this camp. There are two ways to engage this larger impact:

- 1. *Personal change*: Based on this experience, how have you changed in your perspectives around the theme of the peace camp? How might you see things differently in your home context? Are there any actions that you might do as a result of these changes?
- 2. Sharing out: What can you do to share your learnings and experiences with others? The impact of this peace camp goes beyond just the experience of this camp, but to the churches and communities you all are a part of because of the sharing you can do. Think about the spaces you are apart of in your church and community and how you can invite people in those spaces to hear about your experiences.

We ask that you take some time now to think on both a personal level and sharing out towards others, what are some actions you can take. As you come up with ideas, you can write them down below in the following sections.

Personal change:

Sharing out:



