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Introduction

Intervention aims to publish articles that can contribute to the improvement of mental health services, counselling services and psychosocial interventions in conflict areas. Some of the articles in Intervention are based on research data that could be relevant for fieldworkers. Others report the experience of fieldworkers. Still other articles present theoretical views or contribute new theoretical concepts that may help fieldworkers to analyse their practical experience. The articles in Intervention may also stimulate discussion among fieldworkers with divergent approaches and among fieldworkers, academics and policy makers.

This issue opens with such a challenging article by Marian Tankink: *Not talking about traumatic experience: harmful or healing?* This article, based on research in Uganda, ends with the conclusion that in some circumstances the best option may be to keep silent about traumatic experience.

Tankink's contribution is in direct contrast to the article by Elisabeth Schauer et al. on *Narrative exposure therapy for children*. This article is composed around an impressive case history of a Somali boy who received this form of therapy while staying in a refugee camp, also in Uganda. The authors are clearly convinced that talking about traumatic experience, when done in a methodical way, can be healing. Both articles may raise a lot of questions. The Editorial Board welcomes your reactions to these articles.

Not all fieldworkers serving traumatised refugees would give priority to trauma treatment. Under some conditions it may be wiser to address material needs first. In other cases it may be more effective to help

these refugees to participate in collective rituals that may promote healing. Fieldworkers in projects for children may give priority to the support of parents and teachers. Practitioners providing treatment for individual children and adults may give priority to helping children to enlarge their coping repertory.

For children, imagination may be an important factor in coping. In a field report entitled *The tent of stories* Gesineke Veerman describes a method aimed at stimulating this way of coping. Although developed in a Western refugee camp, this method could probably be successfully used in conflict areas in developing countries.

The coping styles of adult refugees are discussed in an article by Sander Kramer & Julia Bala. They focus on the context of a refugee camp, where refugees have to make sense of painful or traumatic experiences in the past, while the future is still unclear. The article is based on research in a Western refugee camp, but discusses ways of implementing the findings of this study in other countries where refugees face uncertainty.

Intervention welcomes detailed accounts of projects that might inspire others to carry out similar interventions. The article by Peter Ventevogel & Frank Kortmann is one such example; it describes the development of mental health training modules for doctors, nurses, midwives and village health volunteers in the context of a general basic health care programme in Eastern Afghanistan.

In areas of armed conflict all over the world, individuals and communities are suffering from the consequences of armed conflict. Some groups of people affected by armed conflict receive assistance from gov-

ernments or Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's); while other groups seem to be ignored. In *Intervention*, fieldworkers are offered the opportunity to call attention to the needs of such seemingly forgotten groups. In this issue, Nico Belo describes the plight of ex-combatants in Ethiopia.

Guus van der Veer