

Mental Health for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The below post was prepared by a friend who is a keen observer of the immigration system, and who has seen many cases in immigration court, at the asylum office, and with USCIS. My friend wishes to remain anonymous:

Refugees and asylum seekers more often than not arrive in the United States after having endured difficult conditions and traumatic experiences. As a consequence, many are affected by stress and trauma-related mental health issues, such as PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder).



Newly arrived asylum seekers often have difficulty finding mental health assistance, especially when many are unlikely to venture beyond their close family and friends, and there are stigmas attached to seeking such assistance. Fortunately across the country, there are many organizations that provide low-cost or free mental healthcare.

According to the [Transactional Record Access Clearing House](#) ("TRAC"), the bulk of asylum cases (six out of ten) are decided in four of the fifty-two immigration courts across the country: New York City, Miami, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Finding assistance in one of those four cities is probably easier than in other places, since immigrant communities are more established.

Regardless of location, the links below should provide a good starting place to find the help needed. The below list is far from comprehensive, so please feel free to share any other sources in the comments section.

And of course, inclusion on this list does not constitute an endorsement. Rather, the organization listed below should provide a starting point for people in need of assistance:

Mental Health Association of California: www.mhac.org (California Only)

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<http://www.asylumist.com/2011/01/07/mental-health-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/>

Florida Mental Health Counselors Association: www.floridamhca.org(Florida Only)

The Pro Bono Counseling Project: www.probonocounseling.org(Maryland only)

CAIR (Capital Area Immigrant's Right's) Coalition: www.caircoalition.org (Maryland, Virginia, and DC)

Mental Health America: www.mentalhealthamerica.net(Nationwide)

Another good place to seek out assistance is any local teaching hospital. Hopefully this list will provide a starting point for those seeking assistance.