



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

# UNODC Family Skills programmes: Progress, Development and Reach in diverse contexts



**STRONG  
Families**

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**PTRS**  
PREVENTION TREATMENT  
REHABILITATION SECTION



# Healthy parenting is essential to early child development

- Parenting supports a child's adjustment beyond their own individual resilience (Betancourt & Khan, 2008)
- Harsh, inconsistent parenting predicts later poor outcomes: drug use, low school attainment, delinquency, poor mental health
- Parents need support in all contexts



# What do families need during stressful times?

Resources that aim to strengthen family protective factors; **communication, trust, problem-solving skills** and **conflict resolution**

+

- How to deal with stress
- Listening to children and talking
- The value of using both love and limits
- How to encourage good behaviour and discourage misbehaviour
- Focus on relationships
- Opportunities to play





- **Primary caregiver- 'protective shield' or can further complicate war stress**
- **Family interaction predictive of children's adjustment in conflict settings**
- **Significant lack of Family Skills programmes in such contexts**

**Families are the  
frontline of defence**



**UNODC**

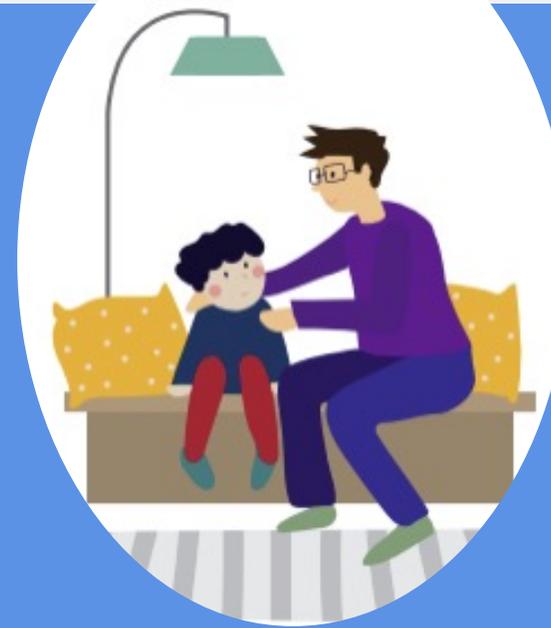
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## Effective Family Skills Programmes: what are they?

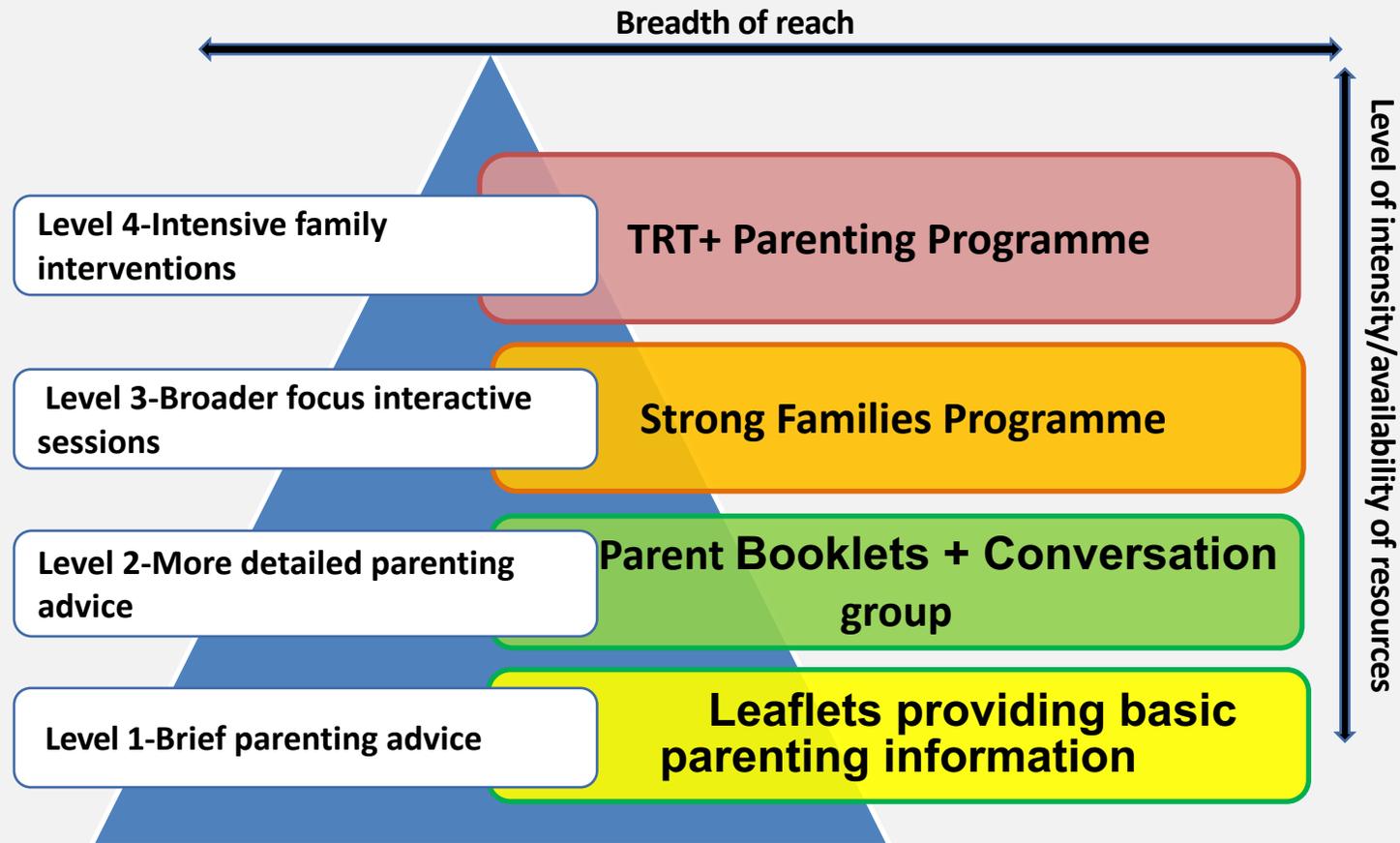
- Programmes that aim to strengthen family protective factors such as **communication, trust, problem-solving skills** and **conflict resolution** that are relevant to their culture
- Often include opportunities for parents and children to spend positive time together, as ways to strengthen the bonding and attachment between the two
- Focus on relationships and behaviour change



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# A FAMILY MULTI-LEVEL PARENTING AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT DELIVERY MODEL FOR FAMILIES LIVING THROUGH CHALLENGING CONTEXTS





**- 3000 leaflets distributed in 2 days**

**59.5% return rate on questionnaires**

**78.5% rated leaflet usefulness as “quite a lot” or “a great deal”**

**El-Khani et al (2016) Global Mental Health**

**- 11 Million reached in Ukraine**

**- Caregiver support in the context of the earthquake that struck Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and neighboring countries**



**INTERVENTIONS**

**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

Daily bread: a novel vehicle for dissemination and evaluation of psychological first aid for families exposed to armed conflict in Syria

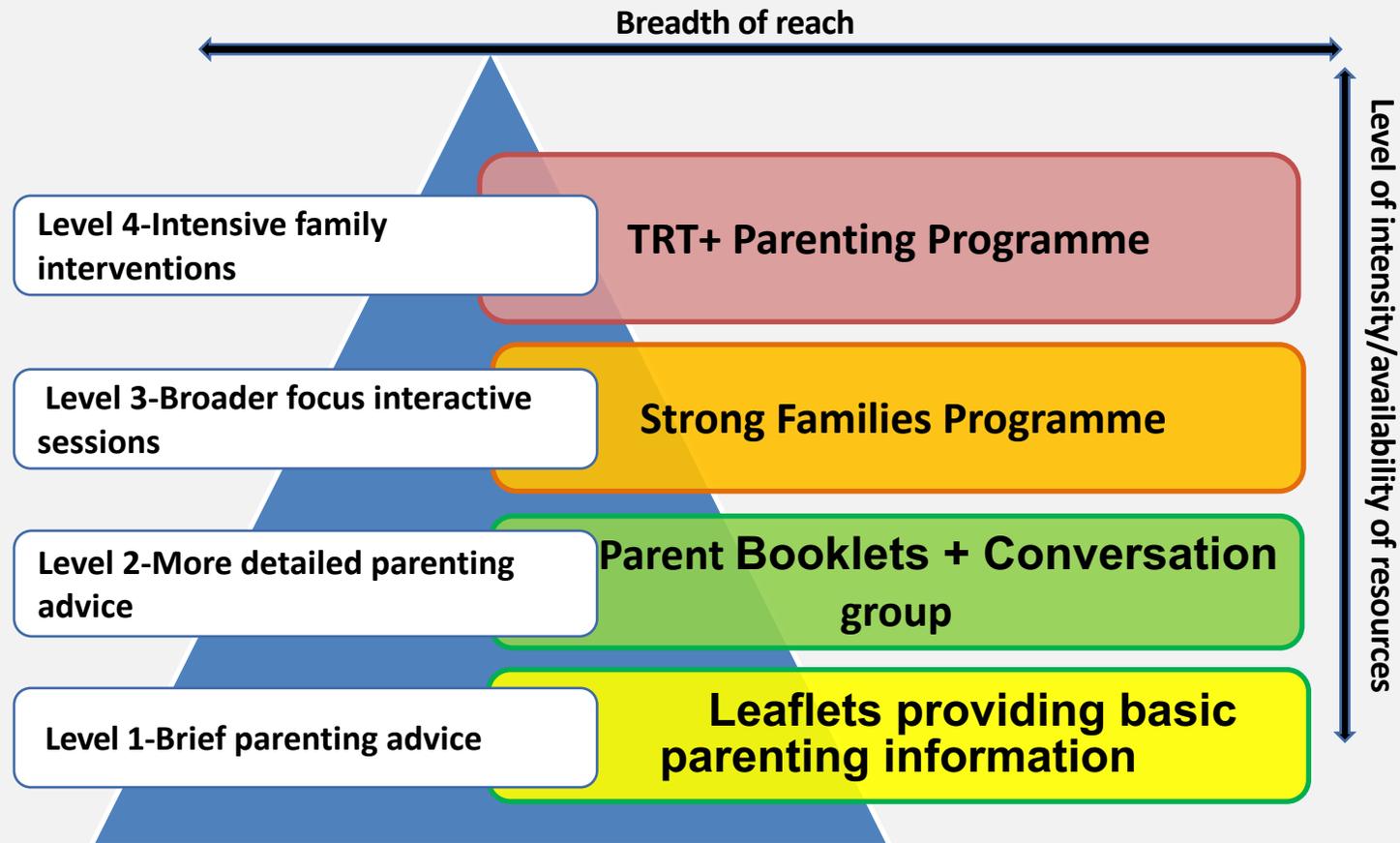
A. El-Khani\*, K. Cartwright, A. Redmond and R. Calam

The University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Global Mental Health (2016), 3, e15, page 1 of 7. doi:10.1017/gmh.2016.9



# A FAMILY MULTI-LEVEL PARENTING AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT DELIVERY MODEL FOR FAMILIES LIVING THROUGH CHALLENGING CONTEXTS



# Caring for Children through Conflict and Displacement



Professor Rachel Calam  
Dr Aala El-Khani  
Dr Kim Cartwright



**PTRS**  
PREVENTION TREATMENT  
REHABILITATION SECTION



## CARING FOR YOUR CHILD IN CRISIS SITUATIONS



### International Journal of Psychology

International Journal of Psychology, 2019  
DOI: 10.1080/00220297.2019.1611111

Caregiving for children through conflict and displacement: a pilot study testing the feasibility of delivering and evaluating a light touch parenting intervention for caregivers in the West Bank

Aala El-Khani<sup>1</sup>, Wadiah Maalouf<sup>1</sup>, Dania Abu Baker<sup>2</sup>, Nosheen Zahra<sup>2</sup>, Ali Noubani<sup>2</sup>, and Kim Cartwright<sup>1</sup>



## CARING FOR YOUR CHILD DURING COVID-19



Now more than ever,  
Listening to children and youth  
is the first step to help them  
grow healthy and safe



**CARING FOR YOUR CHILD  
IN CRISIS SITUATIONS**



**What can you do to help your child?**

Many parents around the world will be excited to embrace this time with their children, spend quality family time with them, and build happy memories for the future. For others, this lockdown will be very challenging, and the difficulty of caring for their children while holding down other roles may be stressful.

The information below provides helpful tips and strategies for all families on how to get through this period. This information is suitable for children of all ages and you will know best how to adapt it to the age of your own child. In addition, there is a separate section below that deals primarily with caring for teenage children.



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**ABOUT YOUR CHILD**

**What might your child be experiencing?**

How your children react to changes can vary depending on a variety of things, including their ages. Here are some common ways children react when they are stressed:

- Some children may be very happy to be home, spending time with their parents, or may feel relieved to be free from the pressure of attending school. Others may struggle from the outset with the disruption to their routine, isolation from friends, and worry about the future.
- Some children may become fearful, overwhelmed and anxious. This can cause sleep difficulties. Some children become clingy to their parents and frequently cry.
- Even children who are initially very excited to be home may at some point in the coming weeks go through phases of misbehaving more than usual and displaying some signs of stress.
- Some children may be unwilling to participate in tasks such as chores or academic work. Remember that it is understandable for your child to show stress reactions or problem behaviours when they are overwhelmed, or their normal routines are disrupted.
- Some children may become unusually active or aggressive, or they may be shy, quiet, withdrawn and sad.



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**CARING FOR  
TEENAGERS**

All the tips in this booklet are applicable to caring for teenage children too. At the same time, it is important to recognise and accept that the teenage years often bring various emotional and physical challenges for children that should be accommodated and sensitively dealt with. This helps to make caring for teenagers easier and healthier for both of you.

- It is normal and healthy for older children or teenagers to want some time away from you. This desire can make this time especially hard for them and for you. If it is safe and allowed for them to go for a short daily walk alone, then encourage this. Otherwise talk to your children about how they can have some time away from family activities and tasks. Try to reach an agreement that they are happy with.
- Be understanding that they likely have a lot of access to news about the current COVID-19 situation through phones and social media.

**SAFETY**

Strive to follow guidelines from your local government on how to stay safe and help manage the spread of COVID-19. This will mean different things for families in different locations across the world. For some this may mean not leaving your home except for picking up supplies for your family, for essential work, to care for vulnerable people, or for daily exercise. For others with no fixed home, you will need to try to keep your family in one location when possible, minimising their contact with new people to whatever extent is possible for you.

**PROVIDING WARMTH  
AND SUPPORT**

- Promise your children that you will do everything you can to care for and protect them. Tell them that they are your top priority.
- Be affectionate with your child by giving them hugs or holding their hand. Tell them that you love them. This will help to reassure and comfort them and will help to maintain a positive relationship.
- Tell them often that you care about them. Being caring and telling your child that you love them will reassure them and help to make them feel more confident.



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**FEARS, ANXIETIES, AND  
AND NIGHT DISTURBANCES**

Fears, anxieties, and night disturbances are very common reactions for children who are experiencing something as extreme as the COVID-19 crisis. Many children will be experiencing fears and anxieties. Some children may initially seem very well but as the weeks progress they may later become distressed. This is understandable, particularly because many children will have access to information on the spread of COVID-19 and the death rate in their countries. Using the positive approaches that we have described can help to make your children feel more confident and reduce their fears.

Warmth, praise, and providing as much safety and predictability as possible are very helpful for them. Fears and anxieties may lead to sleep difficulties such as nightmares and wetting their beds. Remember that it is not possible for your child to control these things, so it is important to take a gentle approach and not make your child more anxious by showing that you find these night disturbances troublesome.

If they are wetting their bed, check for any obvious changes that you can make. For example, are they afraid to get up in the night if they need to urinate? Think through the evening and nighttime routines for changes which could help. Make sure that they have enough to drink during the day, as this can affect the bladder. Res day may actually make the bed. Keeping a cha your child for these ma

Because of the current able to make promises assure your children th possible care of them I will do everything you c have serious concerns, from a doctor or speci

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**SPENDING TIME TOGETHER  
AND TALKING**

- Spending just a few minutes paying attention to your child whenever you can will help them to feel more confident and less anxious.
- You may be very busy with trying to ensure your family have the supplies they need, but perhaps you can spend some time playing together or having a chat. This will make a difference in how both you and your child feel. If you possibly can, make a little quality time for each child in your care.
- Sometimes, when no one seems to be listening to a child, they may carry on trying harder and harder to get attention until someone will listen. For example, this may mean that they speak more loudly and perhaps shout for their parent's attention. The child learns that by making more and more noise, they eventually get the attention they want. By paying attention to what your child wants to show or tell you as soon as you can, you will help them to feel confident and to know that you want to listen to them as soon as you can.
- If your child wants your attention but you can't give it right away, make sure that they know that you will listen to them as soon as possible. This will also help them to be able to wait a little while for your attention. If you can, explain that you can't listen just now, and tell them when you will be able to give them your attention. This will make it more likely that they will talk to you when they need to, and will be able to wait until you can listen.

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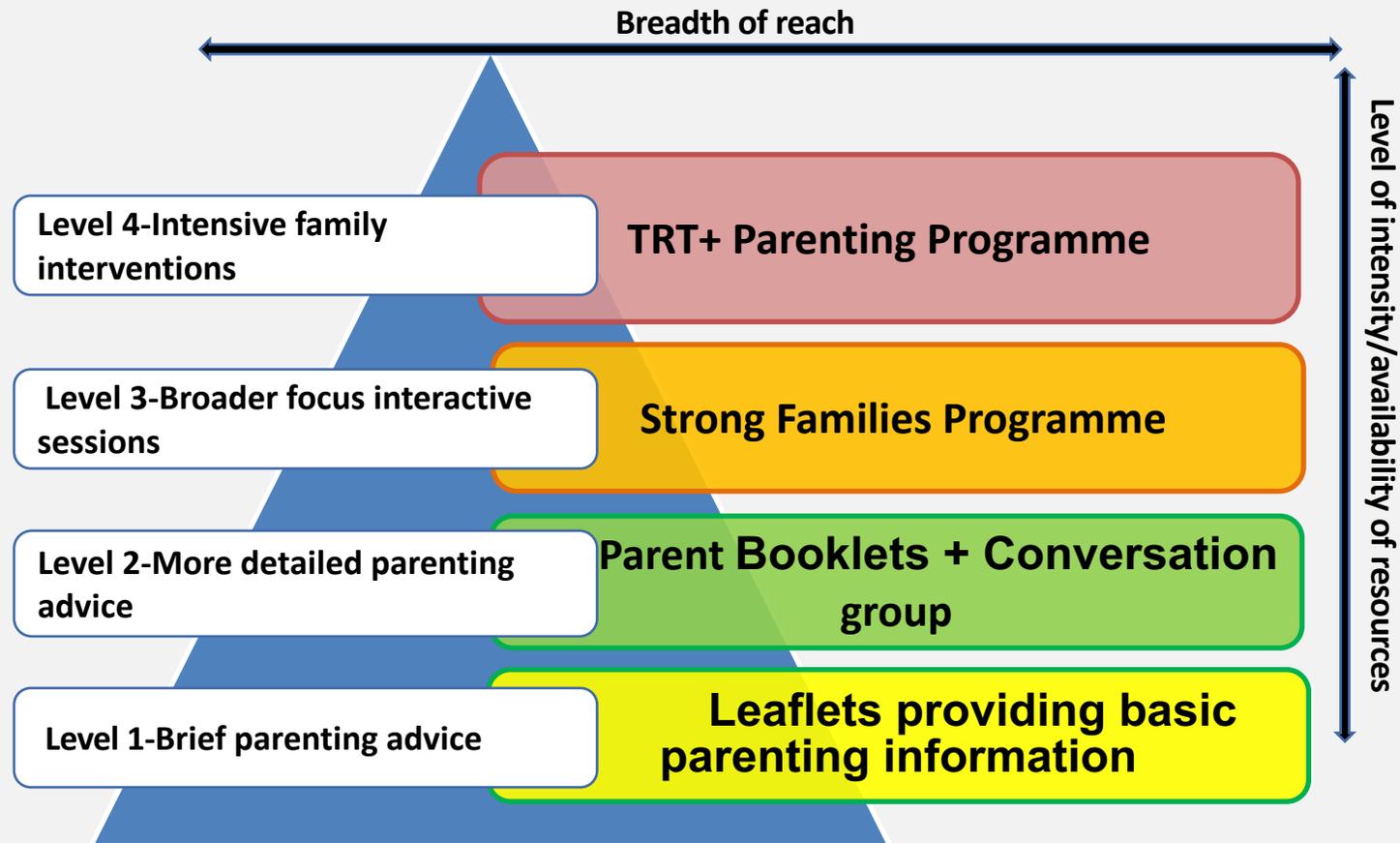
**FIGHTING  
AND AGGRESSION**

One of the common changes that parents notice in their children during times of crisis and change can be an increase in fighting and aggression. The place that you are living, and experiences that the child has had, can affect the way that they behave. Experiencing or seeing violence may make children more likely to show these sorts of behaviours themselves. Sometimes something may remind them of something that has upset them, and this may cause them to show aggressive behaviour. They may re-play aggression that they have seen.

This is a normal reaction to the changes that your children are going through, and the anxiety they may feel, but it can be upsetting and worrying for parents. The daily activities of your child and the way that parents communicate with them can affect the way that they behave.



# A FAMILY MULTI-LEVEL PARENTING AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT DELIVERY MODEL FOR FAMILIES LIVING THROUGH CHALLENGING CONTEXTS





- For settings where families are under stress
- Brief
- Evidence-informed
- Suitable for low resource settings
- Open source (available to everyone without need to pay royalty or copyright fees)
- Cost effective
- Used in over 40 countries so far
- Over 2 million beneficiaries



International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 

Article  
**Assessing the Feasibility of Providing a Family Skills Intervention, “Strong Families”, for Refugee Families Residing in Reception Centers in Serbia <sup>†</sup>**

Aala El-Khani <sup>1</sup>, Karin Haar <sup>1</sup> , Milos Stojanovic <sup>2</sup> and Wadiah Maalouf <sup>1\*</sup>

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Caregiver pre-session Understanding Strengths and Stresses	Caregiver session 1 Using love and limits	Caregiver session 2 Teaching children what is right
	Child session 1 Learning about stress	Child session 2 Following rules and appreciating parents
	Family session 1 Learning about each other	Family session 2 Supporting values and dreams

*In parallel* (vertical text between columns 2 and 3)

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 

Article  
**Impact of a Brief Family Skills Training Programme (“Strong Families”) on Parenting Skills, Child Psychosocial Functioning, and Resilience in Iran: A Multisite Controlled Trial**

Karin Haar <sup>1\*</sup> , Aala El-Khani <sup>1</sup>, Gelareh Mostashari <sup>2</sup>, Mahdokht Hafezi <sup>2</sup>, Atoosa Malek <sup>2</sup> and Wadiah Maalouf <sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section, Drug Prevention and Health Branch, Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Tehran, Iran



Haar et al. BMC Public Health (2020) 20:634  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-08701-w>

BMC Public Health

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Open Access

Strong families: a new family skills training programme for challenged and humanitarian settings: a single-arm intervention tested in Afghanistan



Karin Haar<sup>1</sup>, Aala El-Khani<sup>1</sup>, Virginia Molgaard<sup>2</sup>, Wadiah Maalouf<sup>1\*</sup> and the Afghanistan field implementation team

# Family & Life Skills: 2022-2023

- Family Skills
- Family & Life Skills
- DAPC

- Afghanistan, Algeria, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Egypt, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Myanmar, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zanzibar

- Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, El Salvador, Slovenia, Serbia
- Albania, Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Montenegro, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of South Africa, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Zambia

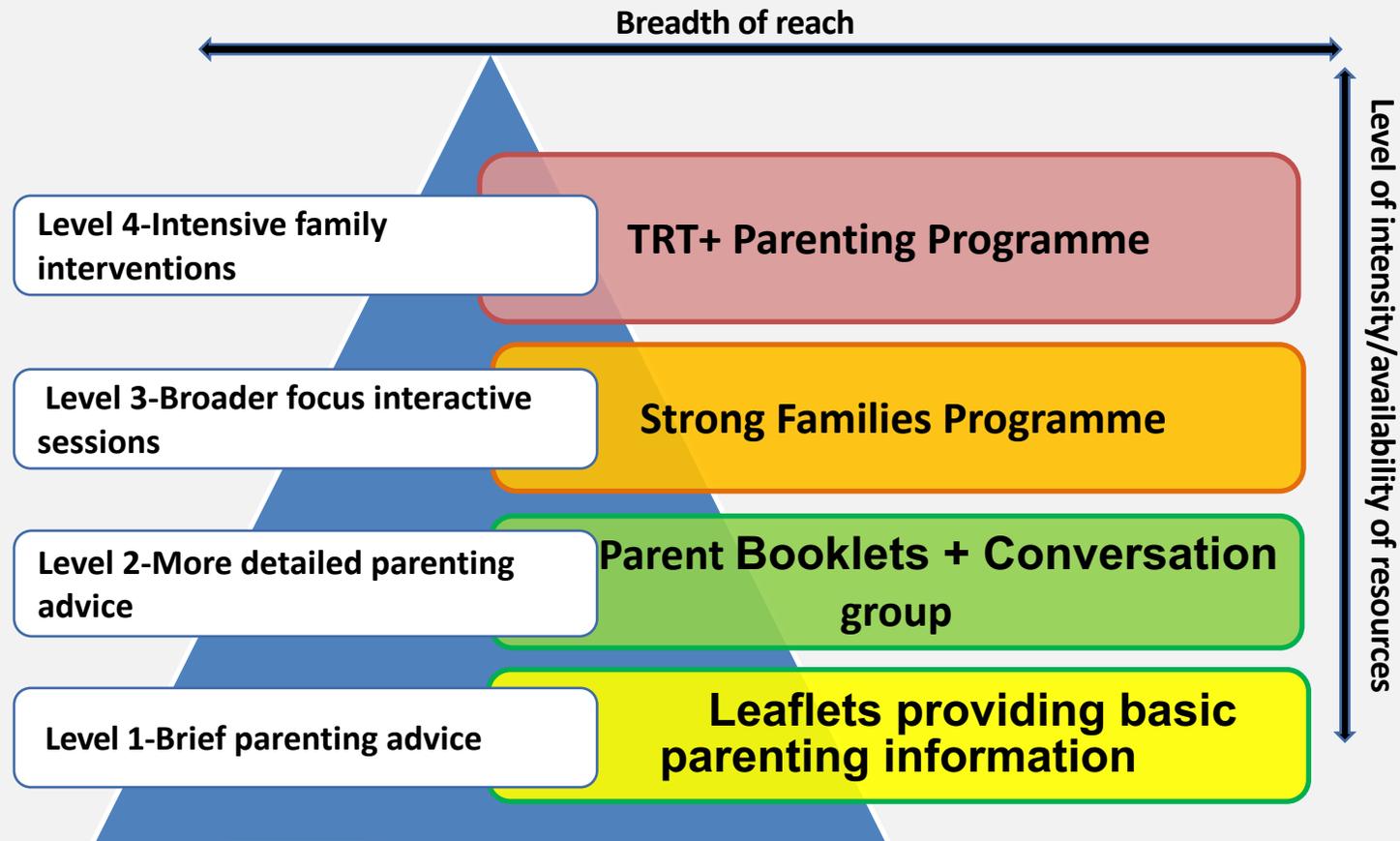
The depiction and use of boundaries, geographic names and related data shown on this map does not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



# PTRS

PREVENTION, TREATMENT, REHABILITATION SECTION  
 Tuesday, February 28, 2023

# A FAMILY MULTI-LEVEL PARENTING AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT DELIVERY MODEL FOR FAMILIES LIVING THROUGH CHALLENGING CONTEXTS



# Teaching Recovery Techniques plus Parenting (TRT+)

Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology  
2018, Vol. 24, No. 2, 188–200

© 2018 American Psychological Association  
1078-1919/18/\$12.00 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pac0000287>

Testing the Feasibility of Delivering and Evaluating a Child Mental Health Recovery Program Enhanced With Additional Parenting Sessions for Families Displaced by the Syrian Conflict: A Pilot Study

Aala El-Khani and Kim Cartwright  
University of Manchester

Cheryl Ang  
University of Bath

Elizabeth Henshaw, Mishaal Tanveer, and Rachel Calam  
University of Manchester

A child trauma recovery programme enhanced with caregiver sessions for children experiencing post-traumatic stress



International Journal of  
*Environmental Research  
and Public Health*

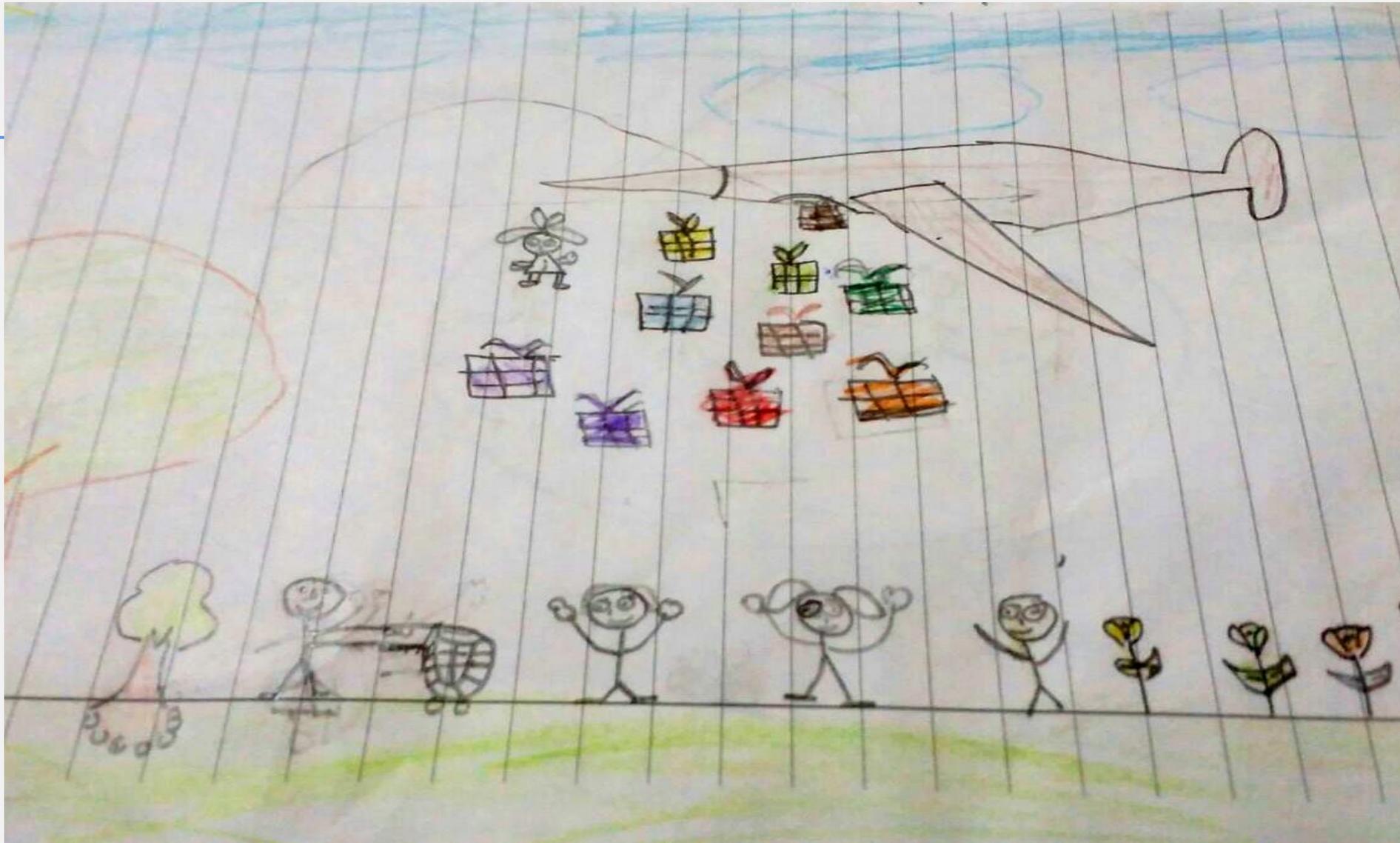


Article

**Enhancing Teaching Recovery Techniques (TRT) with Parenting Skills: RCT of TRT + Parenting with Trauma-Affected Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Utilising Remote Training with Implications for Insecure Contexts and COVID-19 †**

Aala El-Khani <sup>1,2\*</sup>, Kim Cartwright <sup>3</sup>, Wadiah Maalouf <sup>1</sup>, Karin Haar <sup>1</sup>, Nosheen Zehra <sup>4</sup>, Gökçe Çokamay-Yılmaz <sup>5</sup> and Rachel Calam <sup>2</sup>





# Online platform for remote facilitator training

## The Online Strong Families Programme (Cambodia/Thailand)

Welcome to the Online Course of the Strong Families Programme for Facilitators!



In this course you will learn to:

- Identify family strengths
- Recognize contributors to stress in children and caregivers
- Apply methods of stress reduction
- Create opportunities for children and caregivers to communicate their needs

This course includes nine modules (each take two hours) and is to be completed over the span of two weeks. While you have access to all modules from the start you are encouraged to take your time in going through this course, covering one module a day. Between the eighth and the ninth module you will have the opportunity of independent study, in order to give you time to prepare for your webinar presentation to course facilitators in the ninth module.

This course is active and facilitators are available to you from the start of the programme to the final day. The course material itself will continue to stay online on this platform beyond these days, so you can always come back and review any materials.

The most important document for this course is the Strong Families Programme Manual. Please make sure to download this and use it thoroughly while completing this course as well as when delivering the Strong Families Programme to caregivers and children in face-to-face sessions.

*Click on the front page of the Manual below to open it. When clicking on the videos, please remember to open them in a new tab.*



**- Universal family skills programme**

**- Designed for low- and middle-income countries**

**- Piloted in Indonesia and Bangladesh**

**- Dissemination ongoing**



# FAMILY UNITED



# Acknowledgments: Dr Aala Elkhani

UN & non UN partners:  
WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, Partnership to End Violence  
against Children and many more...

## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



@UNODC\_PTRS

#strongfamilies #drugprevention #drugtreatment  
#accesstomedicines #listenfirst #youthinitiative  
#SDG3 #SDG4 #SDG5 #SDG16



UNODC PTRS

With thanks to the generous support of:



<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/prevention/>

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