

How to talk to families from Ukraine that you host?



ADULTS

If you don't speak your guests' language - get a "translator" on your phone or a dictionary.

Find out if your guests have their basic needs taken care of:

- Do they have necessary personal items (comb, toothbrush, clothes etc.)?
- Do they have a telephone so that they can contact you and their relatives?
- If you provide them with an independent apartment, make sure that they have food, personal hygiene products and cleaning products available.
- Show them around and tell them what they can find and where they can go.
- Explain how they can get around the neighborhood or your city to make them feel more autonomous and less dependent.
- Ask them if they need your help in dealing with local administration.

DO's:

- ✓ Respect your guests' privacy - be available, but don't impose your presence.
- ✓ Let them know their story is important to you and listen if they want to tell it; talk if they want to talk about it.
- ✓ Be calm and patient - your calmness will support them.
- ✓ Answer questions, inform about options, but don't be afraid to ask about their needs.
- ✓ If you find it difficult to communicate, use a "translator" on your phone, use dictionaries, try to establish at least a minimal contact.
- ✓ If your guests share your home - don't be afraid to involve them in common household activities (preparing meals, cleaning). This will make them feel more secure and at home.
- ✓ Ask your guests to teach you a few words in Ukrainian, show you how to prepare Ukrainian dishes - it will allow them to keep their own identity.
- ✓ If you have given them a separate place, leave them your contact information, but don't be afraid to "pop in" to ask about what they need.

DON'Ts:

- ✗ Don't take personally behavior that you would otherwise consider inappropriate - such as abruptly leaving the room, expressing dissatisfaction or indifference. Your guests have had traumatic experiences and are experiencing strong emotions as a result. Such behavior does not concern you and your guests are not always able to control it.

- ✘ Don't force them to talk about what they've experienced if you see that it's difficult for them.
- ✘ Don't interrupt their story (e.g. by looking at your watch) if they have started talking.
- ✘ Don't do everything for your guests; if they want to participate or do something themselves, let them.
- ✘ Don't judge what they did or didn't do, don't suggest what they should feel.
- ✘ Don't talk about your own problems.
- ✘ Don't promise to make things right - if you're ready, promise to do whatever it takes to help them.
- ✘ Don't act like you have to solve all their problems for them.
- ✘ Don't belittle their ability to take care of themselves.

CHILDREN

First of all, remember that children from Ukraine have already experienced more than you or most of your adult friends. They have experienced it - and survived!

That's why:

- ✔ Answer their questions if they ask them, adapting your vocabulary to their abilities.
- ✔ If they ask about the war - do not ignore it, do not belittle it, but be honest and always add a positive element, e.g. "yes, Ukraine was attacked, but all European countries are trying to help it and support it in its struggle against the aggressor".
- ✔ If a child starts to talk about his/her fear on their own - let them. Reassure them that it is okay to be afraid. Adults sometimes feel fear or anxiety too. You are worried too, but you and all other adults will do their best to help the child and their family.
- ✔ If the child does not respond to commands or requests, behaves aggressively, is overly agitated or overly withdrawn - remember that the child is probably experiencing strong emotions that they cannot control.
- ✔ If possible, help them connect with peers
- ✔ If possible, try to give them an opportunity to play
- ✘ Don't promise the impossible. Don't lie. If a child asks about dad who stayed in Ukraine, don't assure the child that he will come soon and everything will be fine. Rather, say that you are worried too, but dad is a brave man and will do his best to come as soon as possible and that you will do your best to help him.
- ✘ Don't talk about drastic matters near children.
- ✘ Do not watch drastic television reports with children around.

Remember that children who are a few years old can go from pain and suffering to joy and laughter very quickly!

And remember it's normal.



Created by **Polish EMDR Therapy Association** - association of EMDR therapists, including psychologists, psychotraumatologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, and crisis interventionists working in the field of trauma treatment.

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