

Did You Know?

Social effects of torture

- ❖ Prolonged exposure to combined stressful demands and the inability to meet personal goals impacts on the well-being of a survivor and can contribute to feelings of insecurity about their new living environment.
- ❖ Survivors suffer from social discrimination and stigma in the community.
- ❖ Child survivors suffer from retardations which affects their growth and developmental phase.
- ❖ Torture destabilizes social networks, and causes family breakdown which leaves the survivor with no sense of belonging.
- ❖ A survivor suffers from cultural perception of torture and symptoms especially for women victims of rape and sexual assault.
- ❖ Torture affects the survivors social context before, during and after the torture.
- ❖ Torture destroys the community values and attitudes of the survivor.
- ❖ Survivors are left to **fight** with practical needs for food, shelter, and employment .
- ❖ Survivors of torture are often isolated and disconnected from social relationships.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND INTERVENTIONS TO A TORTURE SURVIVOR

The provision of Social services plays an integral role in promoting a survivors well-being through:

- ❖ Establishing trust and creating a safe environment for the survivor to cope with the situation at hand. The absence of trust interferes with healing and can aggravate the emotions associated with previous separations, losses, and traumas.
- ❖ Understanding cultural norms and traditions of the diverse cultures of the torture survivor, and working towards restoring cultural competence for the survivor.
- ❖ Establishing social supports and identifying social networks, which can be done at individual level and group work.
- ❖ Social support groups that meet on a regular basis, promote positive social interactions, regularly model appropriate expression of emotions, and promote family and cultural values have proven to be effective.

These services are inter-connected with a survivor's medical, mental health, legal and spiritual needs.

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