A Guidebook
for Housing Providers
Supporting Ukrainian Evacuees in Alberta

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The RDN would like to acknowledge that our physical office is located on the historical land of Treaty 6 Territory. We would like to thank our hosts the Nehi-ya-wak (Cree), Saulteaux, Niisitapi (Blackfoot), Red River Metis and Îyãħé Nakón whose traditional land in which we live and work.

Project activities also took place on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region, including the Blackfoot Confederacy, Îethka Nakoda Wîcastabi First Nations, Tsuut'ina First Nation, and Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

As a national organization, we also acknowledge that RDN staff and the communities we support live, gather, and organize across Turtle Island, and we respect the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada.

RDN is committed to supporting the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, and we share this acknowledgement to reaffirm our responsibility and commitment to reconciliation. We also recognize that this land acknowledgement is just that, an acknowledgement; it is but one step in our journey.

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Housing Providers' Guidebook

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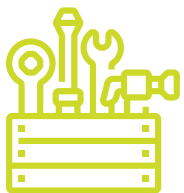
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INTRODUCTION

> *Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in early 2022, over 200,000 Ukrainians have arrived in Canada under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) visa program (GoC, 2023a). This program allowed Ukrainians access to a rapid-entry visa, letting them flee the war quickly (as opposed to typical refugee pathways, like those used for Syrians and Afghans, that take years to complete). Despite fleeing an armed conflict, Ukrainians are not technically refugees; the CUAET visa program allows them to stay in Canada for 3 years.*

Although the CUAET program closed for applications on July 15, 2023, over 900,000 applications were approved, with approved applicants eligible to enter Canada under the program until March 31, 2024 (GoC, 2023a; GoC, 2023b). It is thus expected that early 2024 will continue to see significant numbers of Ukrainian evacuees arriving in Canada until the end of the CUAET program (OUSH-OHPU, 2023). Additionally, while visas under the CUAET program can enable evacuees to stay in Canada for up to three years (GoC, 2023c), 93.3% of Ukrainian evacuees who already arrived in Alberta reported that they intend to apply for permanent resident status in Canada, indicating that many evacuees are indeed looking to stay in Canada long-term.

In light of this situation, many organizations, businesses, communities, groups, and individuals have stepped up to help Ukrainian evacuees and support their settlement and integration to Canada and Alberta. With growing populations of Ukrainian evacuees across the province, it is also the reality that many more organizations, businesses, communities, groups, and individuals who may not specifically aim to support Ukrainian evacuees are and will be increasingly coming into contact with them throughout the course of their day-to-day activities. This is especially true for smaller, rural, and remote communities that may not have formal service providers specialized for settlement and newcomers. Recognizing this, this guidebook seeks to provide these diverse groups and individuals with background knowledge, tips, and best practices for interacting with Ukrainian evacuees in order to support positive outcomes and environments for both newcomers and members of receiving communities, and foster healthy relationships and thriving, integrated communities.

Ukrainian Evacuees

Background on the Conflict in Ukraine

The Russian invasion of Ukraine that started in early 2022 is seen as an escalation of conflict with Russia dating back to 2014. During this time, Russia's occupation and annexation of Crimea took place. Crimea is a peninsula to the south of mainland Ukraine that is recognized by most countries as Ukrainian territory. These actions were accompanied by contestation of territory in the Donbas region, including areas along the eastern edge of the Ukrainian-Russian border in Ukrainian oblasti (provinces) of Donetsk and Luhansk. These conflicts are preceded by an even longer history of complex relationships between Ukraine and Russia, with Ukraine having been formerly a part of the Soviet Union, gaining independence in 1991 (BBC Visual Journalism Team, 2022).

The invasion attacks of late February 2022 that are generally considered the beginning of the current war were called a "special military operation" by the Russian president Vladimir Putin, and carried out under rhetoric of "demilitari[zing] and denazify[ing]" Ukraine (Kirby, 2023). These actions were closely preceded by Putin issuing demands to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for veto power over NATO expansion and reversion of NATO membership to pre-1997 status (which were rejected), as well as Putin recognizing independence of Donetsk and Luhansk from Ukraine as self-proclaimed people's republics (Ray, 2023).

Since the invasion of early 2022, the war between Russia and Ukraine has and continues (at the time of writing of this guide) to see a series of attacks and military clashes, and has had a "disastrous impact on civilian life, killing thousands of civilians, injuring many thousands more, and destroying civilian property and infrastructure" (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

The beginning of the invasion in February of 2022 saw missile strikes on cities across Ukraine, and in the earlier days of the war armed conflict was more widely spread across the country. By early 2023, Ukraine had reclaimed over half of the territory Russia took in 2022, and in late 2023 the main theatre of war and areas under Russian military control are mainly along the southeastern border of the country.

Image 1: How military control of Ukraine has changed

How military control of Ukraine has changed

Feb 2022: Before the invasion   Mar 2022: Russia's rapid advance

Nov 2022: Ukraine regains ground   Nov 2023: Ukraine advances

- ■ Russian military control
- ▨ Limited Russian military control
- ■ Russian-backed separatist-held areas
- ■ Held or regained by Ukraine
- □ Russia annexed Crimea in 2014

Note: Areas held or regained by Ukraine were reset by the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) on 12 May 2023

Source: Institute for the Study of War   BBC

Source: BBC https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60506682 (accessed December 22, 2023)

Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) Program

One way the Government of Canada responded to support Ukrainians fleeing the war was to open the Canadian-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel special measure that "offers Ukrainians and their family members free, extended temporary status and allows them to work, study and stay in Canada until it is safe for them to return home" (GoC, 2022). The program allows Ukrainian nationals and their family members to apply free of charge for an extended visitor visa of up to three years (as opposed to the usual six months), and for an open work permit or study permit, also with waived application fees. This program closed for applications in July of 2023, and is allowing entry of approved applicants to Canada under this program until March 31, 2024. Although closed for applications and soon to be closed for entry, at the time of writing the vast majority of arrived and soon-to-be arriving Ukrainians to Canada are arriving under this program, and can be living here under the status and on the conditions it offers for up to the next three years.

You may have noticed that the term being used to refer to individuals coming to Canada under the CUAET program is '**evacuee**' and not 'refugee'. This is an important distinction to note. Ukrainian evacuees arriving under the CUAET program have a status and visa more similar to the Temporary Foreign Worker program, and are not given permanent resident or refugee status under the CUAET program. This status distinction affects what services and supports evacuees are and are not eligible to apply for and receive.

Ukrainian evacuees under the CUAET program **CAN**:

- Access federally funded **temporary hotel accommodation** for up to 14 days when arriving to Alberta
- Apply for a federal one-time, non-taxable **financial assistance benefit**
  - **$3,000** for each adult (18+), **$1,500** for each child (under 17)
- Access **federal settlement services** (available until March 31, 2025)
- Apply for a **Social Insurance Number**

- Access provincially and federally funded **English language assessment and training** referrals and programs, as well as informal and community language training and classes

- Apply for the same **social housing and rent supplement** programs as other Albertans
- Apply for financial support and benefits through **Alberta's Ukrainian Evacuee Emergency Financial Support and Benefits** program, which provides:
  - One-time emergency benefits
  - Ongoing monthly financial benefits
    - For those that do not have resources to meet basic needs and are unable to get financial help anywhere else
    - Between $824 - $1,746 depending on household size
- Apply for **Alberta health insurance coverage** and get an **Alberta personal health card**
- Apply for the **Alberta Health Benefits (Ukrainian Evacuee)** program
  - Provides coverage for prescription drugs, essential over-the-counter medications, eye exams and glasses, dental care, essential diabetic supplies, and emergency ambulance services
- Register children in **K-12 schools**
- Access many settlement agencies that receive provincial financial support
- Get an **Alberta ID card** or **Alberta driver's licence**
  - Or exchange a Ukrainian driver's licence for an Alberta licence under the one-year exchange program

Ukrainian evacuees under the CUAET program **CANNOT**:

- Receive the same one-year income supports available to refugees under the **Resettlement Assistance Program**
- Access the **Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD)** program
- Access the **Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD)** program
- Receive **Program Unit Funding (PUF)** through Alberta Education for children with severe disabilities
- Access the **Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH)** program*

*Notable, as 5% of surveyed CUAET holder families (both pre- and post-arrival) have at least one member who has special needs or a disability (OUSH-OHPU, 2023).

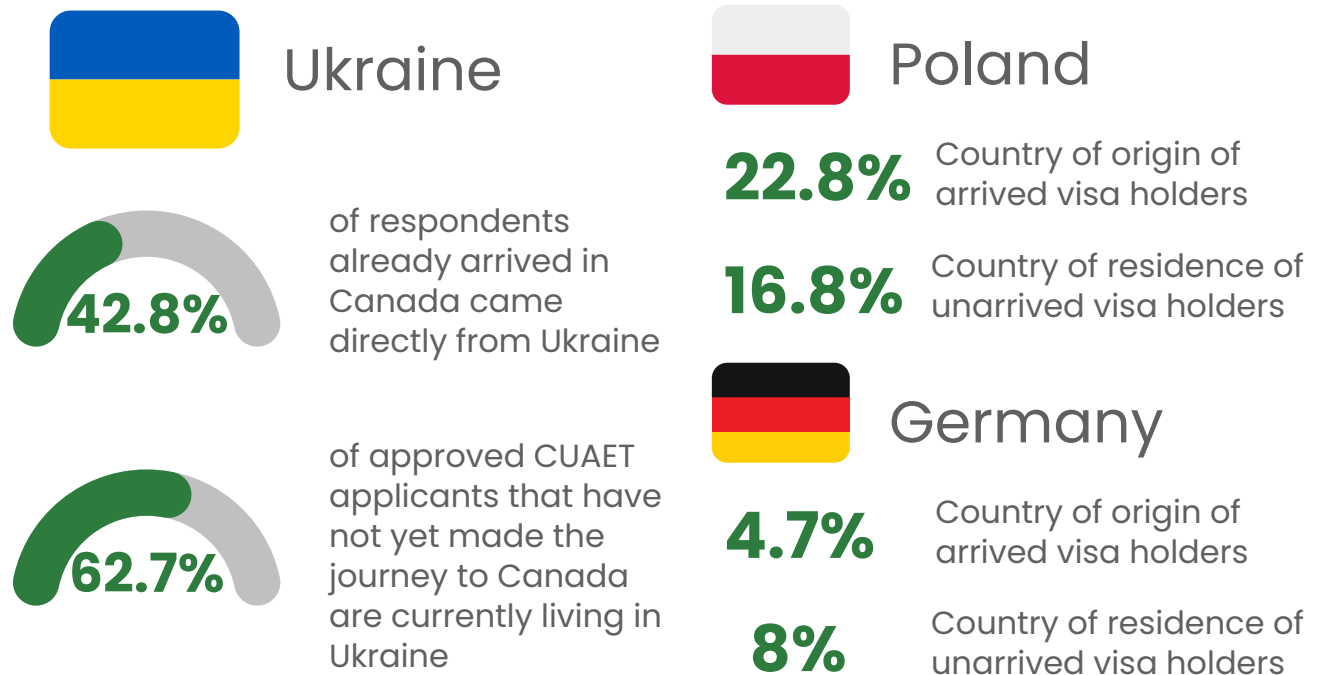# Common Migratory Pathways (Primary vs. Secondary Migration)

6,335,100 — **Data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that 6,335,100 refugees from Ukraine have been recorded globally as of December 2023.**

5,931,500 of these were recorded in Europe, and 403,600 were recorded beyond Europe (Operational Data Portal, 2023). Other estimates put the number of people who have fled Ukraine as high as twelve million (A4HC, 2022), noting large numbers moving to nearby countries such as Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic, and millions more also being displaced internally within the country of Ukraine (Ray, 2023).

Data suggests that while the largest proportions of Ukrainian evacuees coming to Canada are coming directly from Ukraine, for a significant number of evacuees the move to Canada is a secondary migration following primary migration and temporary residence in a third, (and commonly a nearby European) country.

According to the survey of CUAET visa holders done by Operation Ukrainian Safe Haven (OUSH) in October of 2023:

Ukraine

42.8% of respondents already arrived in Canada came directly from Ukraine

62.7% of approved CUAET applicants that have not yet made the journey to Canada are currently living in Ukraine

Poland

22.8% Country of origin of arrived visa holders

16.8% Country of residence of unarrived visa holders

Germany

4.7% Country of origin of arrived visa holders

8% Country of residence of unarrived visa holders

Additionally, migratory journeys are often not over for evacuees after initial arrival to a community in Canada. Many evacuees move between cities within Canada, or from larger cities to smaller centres and rural communities, often due to differences in cost of living.

Evacuee Demographics

Due to military policy, men between the ages of 18 and 60 are largely prohibited from leaving Ukraine. However, some men were already abroad, exempt from policy, or have left the country through other means. Because of this, overall those fleeing Ukraine are mostly women, children, and the elderly. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development or OECD (2023) notes that in most host countries, 70% of adult refugees are women, and around 30% are minors. Data from OUSH's October 2023 survey of both pre- and post-arrival approved CUAET visa holders also suggests a slightly more balanced age and gender distribution of those intending to/residing in Alberta, as can be seen in the tables below (OUSH-OHPU, 2023).

Table 1: Age/Gender Distribution of Pre-Arrival CUAET Holders

Age/Gender	Female	Male	Another Gender	Grand Total
0-4	3.88%	4.18%		8.06%
5-14	8.78%	8.59%		17.37%
14-17	2.32%	2.69%		5.01%
18-25	3.73%	3.65%		7.38%
26-40	20.90%	19.63%	0.06%	40.59%
41-65	10.48%	10.75%		21.21%
65+	1.09%	0.33%		1.42%
Grand Total	50.65%	49.72%	0.06%	100.00%

Source: OUSH-OHPU, 2023, data filtered for those preferring AB for settlement (pre-arrival)

Table 2: Age/Gender Distribution of Post-Arrival CUAET Holders

Age/Gender Distribution

Age	Female	Male	Another Gender	Grand Total
0-4	4.23%	4.50%		8.73%
5-14	8.62%	9.13%		17.75%
14-17	2.33%	2.57%		4.90%
18-25	5.45%	3.87%	0.04%	9.36%
26-40	22.23%	21.24%		43.45%
41-65	8.20%	7.57%	0.02%	15.71%
65+	1.45%	0.40%		1.85%
Grand Total	51.78%	49.04%	0.06%	100.00%

Source: OUSH–OHPU, 2023, data filtered for those in AB (post-arrival)

Other trends being seen in refugee flows noted by the OECD include that there are significant numbers of women fleeing with only children and with dependent adults, as well as a significant number of fleeing families with at least one person with special needs (OECD, 2023). These trends are to some extent reflected in the OUSH 2023 survey data for Alberta, which reported that for both pre- and post-arrival CUAET holders, the average family size is 2.6 individuals, and 5% of families have at least one member who has special needs or a disability.

In regards to language ability and education, data from the CUAET survey shows that for those living or intending to live in Alberta, approximately 23% of arrived CUAET holders and just over 34% of not yet arrived holders have no knowledge to a beginner level of English language ability, and 68% of both pre- and post-arrivals who are workforce participants have academic degrees at the Bachelor's level or above (OUSH–OHPU, 2023).

Implications for Housing and Service Providers, and Other Supporters of Ukrainian Evacuees

It is important to have a basic understanding of the situation that Ukrainian evacuees are coming from and the measures they are coming into Canada under, as these factors can affect the resources available to them and how they behave in, interact with and navigate Canadian society and systems.

One thing to consider is that Ukrainian evacuees may not always match up to the mental images we have of refugees or those fleeing war. Many evacuees arriving under the CUAET program are not coming directly from the theatre of war, or even Ukraine, and rather are making the choice to come to Canada as a secondary migration from situations of relative safety and establishment in other areas and countries. Disconnect between the assumptions and pre-existing ideas that service providers and supporters in Canada have of who they will be or are working with and the realities in which Ukrainian evacuees actually present can lead to misunderstandings, and warrant examination of one's preconceptions and potential biases. It is valuable to keep an open mind, and recognize that each individual has had a unique journey and experiences.

While many arrivals under the CUAET program may not be coming directly from the theatre of war, many are coming from more seriously impacted regions of Ukraine, and/or may have directly experienced violence, loss, and traumatic events. This can have serious and long-term ramifications in regards to mental and physical health, needs, and abilities of Ukrainian evacuees, as well as the assets and documents they have possession of or access to.

For example, evacuees may not be able to provide things like landlord or employer records or references as these documents and/or the institutions, organizations, or individuals that could provide them physically no longer exist, or have otherwise ceased functioning. For housing and service providers, this prompts consideration of our requirements, the ways we typically operate, and how we treat and interact with clients or users, and may necessitate coming up with alternative solutions to address the needs and concerns of both providers and evacuees.

It is also important to recognize how demographic characteristics can lead to compound, intersectional challenges and considerations. While Ukrainian evacuees generally have fairly high education and reasonable English language ability, and have largely been characterized as hard working and eager to contribute to and succeed in Canadian society, as newcomers they often face challenges of education and employment history recognition. As non-refugee and non-permanent resident status CUAET holders, they also face barriers in accessing many services and supports. Furthermore, the prevalence of women, children, elderly, and those with mental and physical health limitations, mean that many are also at higher risk to experience exploitation, inequality, and discrimination.

Demographic characteristics can influence the challenges evacuees face and our perceptions of them, as well as their needs and behaviours and thus our relationships and interactions with them. For example, empirical evidence from groups and individuals working to provide housing and other support to evacuees has noted significant numbers of families looking for larger units or houses, or properties with backyards or that are children/pet-friendly. They have also noted language and cultural barriers that impact things like evacuees' understandings of tenancy rights and responsibilities, lease agreements, and tax systems that can affect their relationships with landlords, property managers, or host families.

Difficulty with credential recognition, and the tendency of many women evacuees that have come with only dependent family members, and thus have care obligations, can limit immediate access to employment and language training opportunities. This, along with lack of tenancy and employment history and documentation are seen as red-flags by many landlords, and can lead to discrimination and difficulty securing housing.

While it may not be in your wheelhouse to try to address or cater to all the issues and challenges that Ukrainian evacuees are facing, acknowledging and taking into consideration cultural differences, effects of loss and trauma, and other experiences that can factor in to how individuals behave can allow more realistic expectations, foster an environment more conducive to developing mutually beneficial solutions, and more effective communication and interaction in ways that are comfortable, safe, and productive for all.

Additional Considerations for Providers of Housing

Hosting and Informal Housing Arrangements

Many families and individuals are choosing to support Ukrainian evacuees by providing temporary host accommodations or short-term, informal housing arrangements, especially to support evacuees immediately upon arrival and/or through the transition stage between initial government provided hotel stays and finding more long-term, permanent housing in Canada.

The Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) has developed a helpful training resource for hosts that provide accommodation for Ukrainian evacuees through the host matching program they run. Some of the key points and things to consider are summarized below, and the full course can be accessed at https://ukrainiansinalberta.ca/aaisa_hosting_training/.

Things to Consider When Hosting

Consider Your Space

- How many people can you accommodate? How many bedrooms and bathrooms does your space have? Do you have enough furniture? Do you have enough space to offer reasonable levels of privacy?
- Is your space kid friendly? Pet friendly? Smoking or non-smoking? Accessible for people with disabilities or mobility concerns?
- Does your space have safety features in place such as working smoke detectors, fire and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms, stabilized staircases, non-slip surfaces, and a first aid kit?

Consider Your Relationship With Those You May be Hosting

- How long can/do you want to offer accommodations for?
- What level and types of support besides housing can/do you want to offer?
  - Other types of support you can choose to offer would include financial support, transportation, help with accessing other services, getting registered for other programs, acquiring documentation, finding employment, etc.
- What responsibilities will each party have around the home?
  - For example sharing meals and cooking, household chores, maintenance, and cleaning?

Consider Putting in Place a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- More formal rental and tenancy agreements use leases to clarify rights and responsibilities between landlords and tenants
- In the absence of a formal lease, it can be helpful for hosts and guests to use a MOU, which is a non-binding and non-legal document outlining what can be expected in a relationship
- MOUs can help set expectations and boundaries surrounding the duration of a host accommodation, shared spaces, safety, responsibilities, commitment and settlement, and expenses
- A MOU template is available from AAISA as part of their hosting program training

(AAISA, n.d.)

Technology and communication

In addition to the rights and responsibilities set out in the Residential Tenancies Act, obligations to ensure rental premises meet standards under the Public Health Act and Housing Regulations, and the other considerations mentioned previously in this guidebook such as reviewing documentation requirements and tenant rules, expectations, and relations, another factor to think about is the modes of communication used with tenants. Many evacuees may not have immediate access to a desktop computer, and may have more access and be more familiar using mobile based chat and messaging apps as opposed to phone or email. Facebook and Telegram are two examples of mobile friendly applications that have been popular with evacuees for finding and interacting with supportive communities.

Supporting Newcomer Populations

General Newcomer Needs

Following is a list of some of the most prevalent needs that newcomers have, regardless of background culture or place of origin. Commonly experienced needs include:

Language support

Cultural orientation and adaptation
For example: adapting to Canadian winter weather or winter driving.

Employment support

Understanding and knowledge of the Canadian tax and law systems

School systems
Public vs. catholic systems, registration, bus systems, structure of school and extracurricular activities, getting school supplies, homework help and schoolwork support, etc.

Documentation and applications
immigration documents, applying for things like mortgages, bank documents, etc., applying for government, community, and/or private programs and services

Transportation
Especially challenging in rural areas.

Social networking support

Healthcare services
What clinics are available, health card access, how to get prescriptions, etc.

Housing

(RDN, 2023a)

In regards to housing specifically, some more common challenges that Ukrainian evacuees have been noted to be facing include finding units with appropriate size and amenities for families and for households with pets, and struggles with larger upfront costs for securing rental housing such as damage or security deposits. While occupancy and deposit policies are largely up to the discretion of housing providers (to a certain extent), many landlords and management companies have taken actions that may give Ukrainian evacuees the benefit of the doubt and reduce barriers, including waiving or reducing deposit costs and offering special rental rates. There is also the opportunity for landlords and housing providers to consider more flexible approaches that ease challenges for evacuees without putting too much undue burden or risk on supporters or housing providers, such as allowing a damage deposit to be built over a longer period of time as opposed to paid in full upon signing a lease, or some leniency on pet policies with risk offset by pet rents or damage fees.

Depending on the nature of your relationship with Ukrainian evacuees or the types of support you are looking to provide, it may not be your responsibility or within your capacity to support evacuees in all of the areas on the above list. In the case that it is out of your scope to fully address some of these needs, there are other resources that you can easily direct Ukrainian evacuees to for further support, if necessary. Being aware of these resources and being able to link evacuees to them is an easy action that can help improve evacuees' overall success and quality of life here in Alberta, and help build positive relationships and rapport with evacuees.

Some of the most comprehensive resources to link evacuees to include:

- **RDN/AAISA Ukrainian Evacuee guidebook**
- **Alberta's Ukrainian response**
- **AHS landing page** of supports for Ukrainian evacuees

- Government of Alberta **Support for Ukrainian evacuees webpage**
  - Ukraine Help Line – provincial supports and services in English, Ukrainian, and Russian – **1-888-701-1101**
  - **GoA Information guide for Ukrainians arriving in Alberta**
  - **.pdf poster** that supporters/housing and service providers can post with link to GoA resources for Ukrainian evacuees

Cultural Differences

Cultural Competency

Cultural competency skills can be of great benefit not just in interactions with Ukrainian evacuees, but are valuable more broadly across the increasingly multicultural makeup of Canadian society. Rather than factual knowledge of specifics of each individual culture, the idea of cultural competency centres around the ability to develop more general knowledge, skills and attitudes to effectively communicate, interact, and develop functional and meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds. Building cultural competence involves increasing awareness of ourselves and others, developing appropriate social skills and behaviours, and recognizing and respecting diversity through our words and actions. Cultural competency is a willingness to learn about and respectfully approach difference. A few simple ways to start building cultural competence are to get in the habit of asking open-minded, open-ended questions to learn more about other cultures, as well as making efforts to identify verbal and non-verbal actions that may be inappropriate to other cultures (RDN, 2023b).

While the most important factor of cultural competency is an open mind, willingness to learn, and ability to reflect, some specific cultural knowledge can also come in handy during and contribute to effective intercultural interactions and communication. In the context of housing provision for Ukrainian evacuees, one significant cultural difference worth being aware of is the ways in which rules are often perceived and treated differently in Canadian and Ukrainian cultures.

Canadians are typically rule-followers, and Canadian society puts a strong emphasis on politeness and respect. Legal, political, and regulatory systems are designed to uphold and enforce laws fairly and impartially. This contributes to a culture where people are more inclined to follow rules.

Rules, laws, and expectations in Canada surrounding housing, driving, employment, and many other aspects of life may be different from those Ukrainian evacuees are used to. General attitudes, understandings of the rigidity of rules, and importance placed on following rules can also differ between cultures, and can create misunderstandings and potential for conflict. For example, evacuees may not be as used to stricter Canadian tenancy obligations and responsibilities and lease terms. Non-compliance or expectation for the rules to have some flexibility can easily be perceived negatively as intentional or malicious avoidance or inability to follow the rules, make payments, or live by the same norms as the rest of mainstream society and thus create tension. By anticipating these cultural differences, housing providers can take approaches such as making sure to be very clear about their rules, policies, and expectations from the outset of a relationship, and specify what may be or what is definitely not negotiable in leases, policies, deadlines, etc. in order to minimize future misunderstandings and conflict.

Cultural Humility

Difficulty with credential recognition, and the tendency of many women A complementary model to the concept of cultural competence is that of cultural humility. The model of cultural humility is based around the idea that no one that exists in a social environment is without some bias.

People learn perceived values of their own and others' identities from the social systems they grow up and live in, including from one's family, and from societal institutions such as the educational system, medical establishment, law enforcement system, the media, and so forth. Following this assertion, cultural humility promotes three principles:

- **Commitment to an ongoing process of compassionate self-awareness and inquiry**
- **Being open and teachable**
  - Making an effort to see cultures as others see them, not just with how we have come to know or define them
- **Continually considering the social systems that have contributed to shaping our and others' experiences of reality**
  - This includes acknowledgement of real and perceived power differences and dynamics in our relationships, and promotes efforts to equalize imbalances as much as possible

(RDN, 2023b)

Examples mentioned earlier in this guidebook are illustrative of how cultural humility can apply in housing provision relationships, and in interactions with Ukrainian evacuees. Taking time to examine our preconceptions and existing mental images of how refugees or evacuees 'should' look or act, and to consider the how, why, and where it comes from of common housing and rental practices and processes (documentation, applications, leasing agreements, tenancy rules, requirements, and expectations, etc.) are demonstrative of the self-awareness, inquiry, and open mindedness inherent in cultural humility. While it may not always be possible or desirable to change these practices or processes, at the very least having a better understanding of them and how they affect and are perceived by others, including Ukrainian evacuees, can foster more understanding and empathy in our relationships, and enable better, more effective communication.

Considering Trauma

Trauma-Informed Care

Similarly to the case with cultural competency and cultural humility, being able to take a trauma-informed care approach does not mean becoming an expert in trauma or treating it. The provision of targeted treatments by clinicians with specialized training and expertise in order to directly address symptoms and impacts of trauma is referred to as trauma-focused or trauma-specific care. Rather,

trauma-informed care is a way of interacting with others that involves understanding and considering trauma, the ways it presents, and the ways it affects people. The goal of trauma-informed care is to promote a culture of safety, empowerment, and healing (AHS, 2022).

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) defines trauma as the result of an event or circumstance that causes physical, emotional, and/or life-threatening harm that has lasting negative effects on an individual's mental, physical, or emotional health and social or spiritual well-being. Traumatic experiences are associated with behavioural and chronic physical health conditions, and have been linked with substance use, mental health conditions, and other risky behaviours (SAMHSA, 2022) . The impact of trauma can present in interpersonal behaviours in forms such as distrust, social withdrawal or detachment, and interpersonal conflict (AHS, 2022). These effects can present challenges in an individual's relationships, career, and all aspects of life, and may present during your relationships and interactions with Ukrainian evacuees.

As mentioned above, it is likely not your responsibility or within your expertise to treat trauma. There are, however, some basic approaches, strategies, and actions you can take to facilitate a safer, trauma-informed environment and foster more positive relationships with those you are interacting with. Some of these include:

Understanding and considering trauma, recognizing its signs and symptoms and the ways in which it can present
- Being patient, consistent, and transparent in communication and interaction
- Being clear on boundaries, limits, and expectations – providing written copies can be helpful
- Being mindful of possible triggers and re-traumatization
  - For example, giving adequate advance notice of alarm testing
- Ask questions on a need to know basis, consider what information is really needed and avoid asking for more information than is necessary or forcing disclosure

Linking to further specific supports and resources
- Being aware of resources you can link individuals to to support with treatment and management of trauma and its effects
  - To receive mental health and addiction information/advice you can call **1-877-303-2642**. The call line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
  - **https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/amh.aspx** AHS Addictions & Mental Health landing page
  - **https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/asu/if-asu-ukraine-addictions-mental-health-resources.pdf** AHS Addictions & Mental Health support and resources

Promote social inclusion (Linschoten, 2023)
- Examples include resident community boards or events. Making sure residents are aware of these can promote social inclusion, community involvement and cohesion

Burnout and Self-Care

Being exposed to trauma and trauma responses, and working to support Ukrainian evacuees can sometimes seem like a tireless or hopeless endeavor, and take physical, mental, and emotional tolls on those interacting with Ukrainian evacuees in supporting and service roles. While many readers of this guide may not be as likely to experience vicarious or secondary trauma as those providing direct trauma related treatments or trauma-focused or -specific care, the negative effects of burnout and compassion fatigue are very real for many people supporting evacuees across a range of roles and capacities. It is important to be able to recognize the signs, and properly take care of and support oneself, too.

Burnout refers to a "state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion often caused by excessive or continuous stress over time [and] may or may not be related to hearing traumatic stories or seeing the effects of trauma" (RDN, 2023c, slide 46). Compassion fatigue is when one "reach[es] a point where one feels too tired to care, and may not be able to show empathy and compassion to others" (RDN, 2023c, slide 46). In addition to physical symptoms such as aches, pains, dizziness, exhaustion, depressed immune system response, or panic reactions, burnout and compassion fatigue also commonly manifests as withdrawal, poor communication, or increased conflict in interpersonal relationships, decreased morale, interest, and satisfaction in one's work, sudden absenteeism, lateness, irritability, irresponsibility, or avoidance of tasks, and decreases in productivity, quality of work, and motivation.

Some strategies to enhance resilience and avoid and address the effects of burnout and compassion fatigue include:

> **Supporting one's general wellness**
> - Finding and nurturing other passions and hobbies
> - Taking time to rest, relax, and play
> - Maintaining physical and mental health

Seeking support
- Workplace support from colleagues/peers or management
- General support from community

Setting boundaries
- Be clear about your role and responsibilities, and set realistic expectations
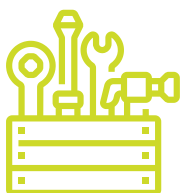- Learn to say 'no'

(RDN, 2023c)

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the work you are doing to support Ukrainian evacuees in Alberta. Your time, effort, and care are appreciated, and are making important differences in the lives of newcomers, and contributing to building strong, integrated, healthy communities across the province.

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