

Re-thinking therapeutic foster care for families
with unaccompanied minor refugees:
the foster care worker at the heart
of the care network

Patrick Meurs (Uni Kassel, Odisee)

- Therapeutic foster care (enhanced foster care, treatment foster care)
- For families in which foster care as usual wasn't enough
- Mainly for foster children with a background of trauma

- Today's therapeutic foster care strengthens foster care workers by knowledge acquisition, skills training as well as intervision, supervision and embeddedness in a learning network of colleagues

- Trauma in the lives of fostered children and youngsters with a background of exile: what kind of trauma
- Foster children in general: attachment trauma, complex relational trauma, developmental trauma
- Foster children with a background of exile: trauma of the loss of trustworthiness of human relationships, trauma of de-humanization, trauma of cumulative losses, unbearable survivor guilt, un-thinkable loyalties

- Foster care workers at the centre of foster care
- The most important position in the network around families
- So, do not leave the foster care workers alone and do fully support them !!

- Conceptual model + practical guide + supervision/reflective spaces for foster care workers
- In the conceptual model: knowledge on developmental specific elements, on cultural-sensitive methods and interventions, on kinship foster family dynamics, on specificities of foster care organisations in different countries, on network and community oriented approaches, on trauma research and trauma-sensitive interventions...

- The loss of trust in the goodness of life, the loss of basic trust, the loss of epistemic trust
- Work with the foster child, the foster parents and with broader networks around the family: the three track model

- The importance of a learning network of trauma-sensitive and cultural diversity-sensitive foster care within the EU

- Mentalisation based interventions: getting in touch with the inner world, in order to understand difficult behavior of foster children
- The foster care worker as a (cultural) mediator, opening up a space for presence within the family, for relationship-based interventions and for eventually specific interventions of other professionals