

Field reflections from training Finnish asylum officials in investigative interviewing

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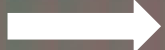
Psychology at the Frontiers: Asylum Interviewing and Decision Making [Psych-AID]

Assessing Asylum Claims

Clear definition...

*“A person who “owing to **well-founded fear** of being **persecuted** for reasons of **race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion**, is outside the country of [their] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail [themselves] of the protection of that country.”
(UN Refugee Convention, 1951)*

... but complex determination process!

Lack of physical evidence  importance of interview

Asylum interviews

Cross-cultural setting

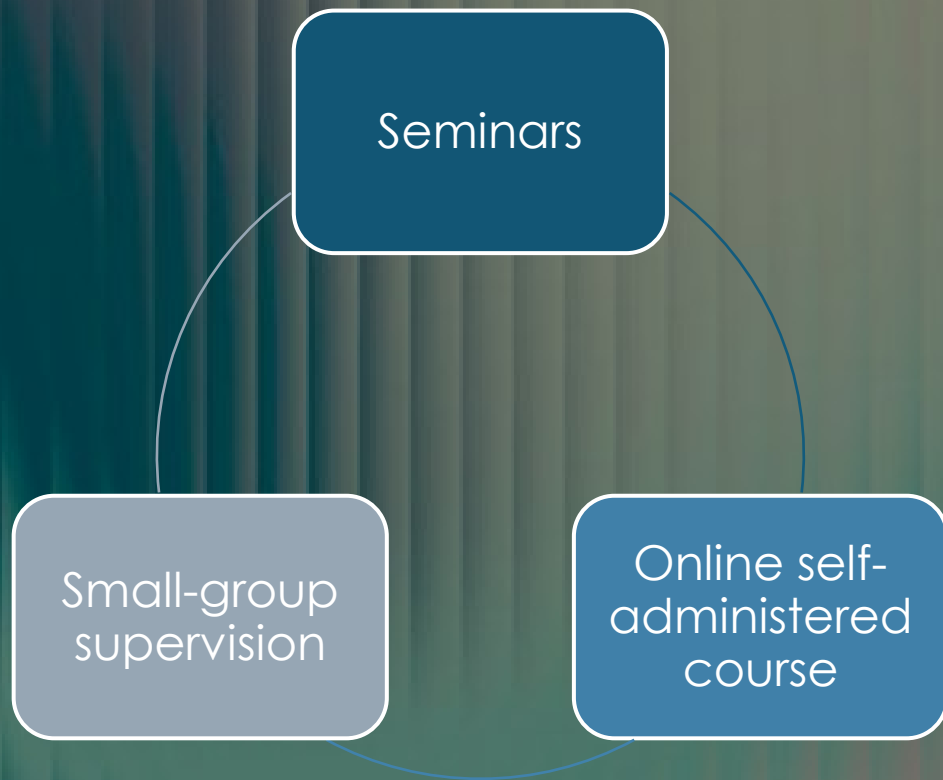
Interpreter-assisted

Negative life events

Interviews only partially in line with best practice:

- Information-gathering style
- Overreliance on closed questions
- Misunderstandings and complex questions

Training program in legal psychology



Training program content:

- Investigative interviewing, memory, culture, trauma, decision-making and credibility assessments

Pretest – posttest evaluation with waitlist control group:

- Significant improvements in know how

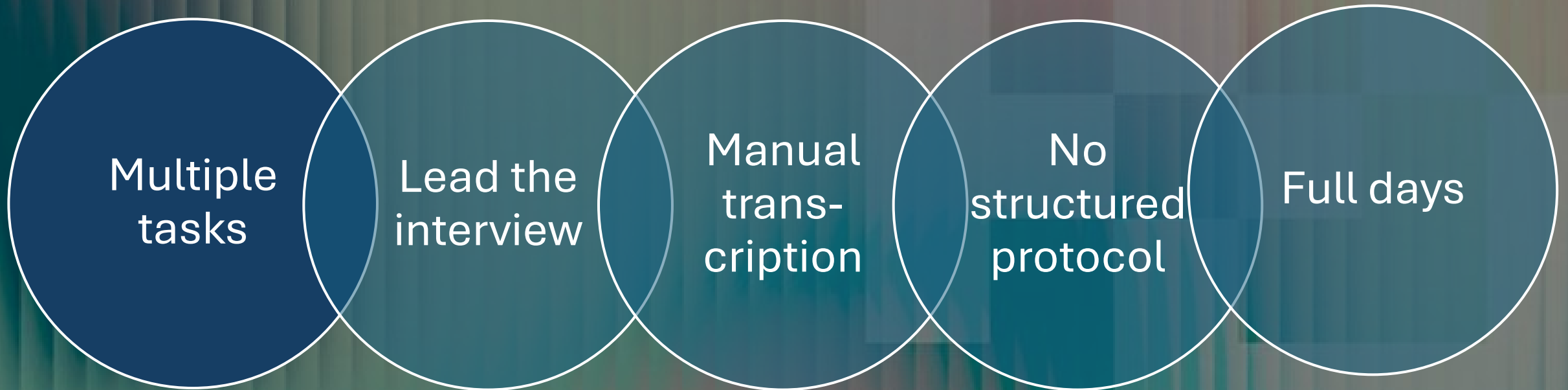
Reflections from the training

Based on participants' written reports during seminars and the trainers' observations

Two main topics:

- Organizational constraints regarding interviewing procedures
- Practical challenges related to questioning techniques

High workload during interview



Physical environment

Unwelcoming and formal rooms

Difficulties building rapport

Online interviews

Benefits

- Increased flexibility and accessibility
- Safe place

Concerns

- Confidentiality
- Rapport-building and monitoring well-being
- Technical issues

Collaboration with legal representatives

“Us vs them” - Mistrust toward migration agency

Unprofessional behaviour

Collaboration with interpreters

Trained vs untrained!

Gender, nationality and ethnicity of interpreter

Shared pre-interview preparation

Questioning techniques

Talk too little – or too much!

Building rapport, setting expectations and instructing effectively

Conclusions

Structural barriers + heavy workload + limited support

➔ moral stress and low work satisfaction

➔ large turnover

Limited effect of training



Thank you for your attention!



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