

Amna

Emergency Response

Training and wellbeing support for communities and frontline workers impacted by the earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye.



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Introduction

In the early hours of Monday 6th February 2023, a devastating earthquake hit Southern Türkiye and Syria. Since the initial disaster, countless aftershocks and further earthquakes have struck the disaster zone, leaving little room for respite for those affected.

The earthquakes have killed over 50,000 people in both countries and made many more homeless. Losing your home - somewhere that is usually a place of sanctuary - is painful. Syrian communities in Syria and Türkiye had already experienced multiple displacements prior to the recent earthquakes.

Natural disasters such as earthquakes take a significant toll on the mental health of survivors, who commonly experience sleeping problems, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorders in the aftermath. Without psychological support, people's emotional challenges remain invisible, unheard, and unacknowledged - leading to greater health problems for survivors.

About Amna

Amna is a direct delivery and training organisation whose mission is to increase access to empowering, psychosocial healing spaces for communities displaced by conflict and climate.

Amna provides training and capacity strengthening to organisations working with people who have become displaced to deliver non-clinical community-based interventions that help make people who have experienced traumatic events and forced displacement feel safe again.

We provide training in trauma and identity informed practices that are evidenced based and draw from traditions and healing wisdom all over the world.

Amna's team is made of psychosocial care specialists, early childhood experts and humanitarians many of whom have personal experience of displacement.

To date, Amna has worked with partners across Europe, the MENA region and South Asia.

Emergency Response

In the aftermath of the earthquake and its tragic impacts across Northern Syria and Türkiye Amna is providing the following free services to communities impacted by the earthquake.

Wellbeing support

Therapeutic groups for people affected by the earthquakes

Therapeutic groups are available for those who experienced the earthquakes and are in need of psychological support to help process feelings of loss, grief, anger, sadness and instability. These groups are safe and confidential spaces run by a trained therapist, where participants can access support from both the therapist and fellow group members.

Methods used in the groups may include talking or creative therapies such as music, movement or mindfulness activities. Psychoeducation is also used to help group members understand what's happening internally to promote emotional healing.

Amna therapists are all professionally qualified in a range of disciplines and are further trained and clinically supervised by Amna.

Wellbeing groups for humanitarian responders

Amna Humanitarian Wellbeing Spaces provide a safe, confidential, reflective practice space for volunteers and professionals working with displaced communities.

There are thousands of humanitarian responders who have been working tirelessly across Türkiye and Syria saving lives and ensuring communities impacted by the earthquakes are looked after in the most challenging of contexts. These frontline workers need their own wellbeing support to sustain them to continue providing this support and process what they have witnessed to avoid secondary trauma and burn out.

The groups provide a safe space for members to share anything they feel they need to offload, to provide a reflective practice space with peers and to experience wellbeing practices that promote self-care in the session and that can be practiced outside of sessions.

Amna's Humanitarian Wellbeing Spaces are facilitated by Amna's Associate Therapist team.

Training support

Setting up safe psychosocial healing spaces for earthquake-affected communities

Amna is facilitating free, online, 3-hour trainings for frontline workers and volunteers working with communities impacted by the earthquakes. The trainings provide an introduction to safe, good practice trauma and identity informed tools and principles when setting up psychosocial support spaces with any age group.

The training includes:

- Core principles for setting up a safe healing space.
- An introduction to trauma-sensitive practice – so that potential trauma responses are recognised and responded to safely.

- An introduction to identity-informed practice – to ensure that affected communities are at the centre of the response.
- Trauma and identity-informed tools that can be incorporated when setting safe healing spaces in an emergency setting.

Participants can find out about dates of the trainings and register online [here](#).

Setting up safe psychosocial healing space for children and families in emergency settings

This is a 6-hour training, spread over two 3-hour sessions drawing on best practices from Amna's Early Childhood Development Model [Baytna](#).

These trainings are for teams who are setting up child friendly spaces to be guided through practical steps for how to set up a space from scratch. It will also train participants in how to incorporate essential trauma informed care into child friendly spaces to enhance the support these spaces can provide to children and their families to try to mitigate the long-term impacts of trauma.

The training is an accompaniment to the booklet [Creating Psychosocial Healing Spaces for Young Children](#).

Training objectives include:

- Understanding the physical and psychological effect of earthquake on children and families.
- Exploring children's responses and developmental capacity to understand death and disaster.
- Guidance for how to communicate with children of different ages about what has happened and process grief together.
- Emphasising the importance of a whole family (children and caregiver) approach and practice guidance for this.
- Sharing and practicing tools that facilitate safe expression through healing play activities (including the use of rhythm, music, art, storytelling, movement and mindfulness activities).
- Practical steps for how to set up a physical safe space in an unsafe external environment, including guidance about materials and space set up (for example, play corner, relaxation corner, storytelling corner).
- Trauma informed theory and tools to facilitate a trauma-sensitive environment and plan activities that support participants to recover a sense of safety in their bodies.
- Theory and tools for how to work in an identity informed way.
- Practices that promote frontline workers wellbeing and self-care.

To express interest in any of these programmes, please contact Amna's Project Assistant Wajihah Zaman at Wajihah@Amna.org.

With love and solidarity,

The Amna team