



Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

# Migrants-in-Transit: A Group Work Intervention Model (Phase I)

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## CONTEXT: CURRENT EVENTS

**70.8 million.** Number of individuals that were forcibly displaced worldwide in 2018 —A new record high! (UNHCR, 2019).

**254,300 asylum applications.** The United States continued to be the largest recipient of new asylum applications in 2018 (UNHCR, 2019).

**US-Mexico Border: Humanitarian Crisis.** Several directives by the Trump administration (e.g. metering, “zero tolerance”, and Migrant Protection Protocols) have restricted admission and increased immigration enforcement. Collectively, these policies undermine the United States’ humanitarian immigration laws that offer protection to those rightfully seeking asylum. They have created a situation of chaos, human rights violations, and extreme vulnerability and suffering along the border (American Immigration Council, 2020).

**Triple Trauma Paradigm.** Migrants are often impacted by intersecting traumatic experiences —at the country of origin, throughout the journey, and after relocating (Orley, 1994 as cited in Chang-Muy & Congress, 2015).

**Exacerbated Need for Psychosocial Response.** Increased waiting periods and altered paths of migration call for a comprehensive, psychosocial response throughout the US-Mexico migration corridor (in addition to immediate relief).

## RESPONDING TO CURRENT EVENTS

- 1.- Provide **psychosocial intervention** to migrants-in-transit through a **group modality**
- 2.- Establish a **transnational partnership** to develop and implement the group intervention
- 3.- Encourage social work field programs to be responsive to the dynamic context of field, in order to provide **mutually relevant learning opportunities** for students and partner sites.

## TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

### Participants:

- Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work (authors, future fieldwork students)
- *FM4 Paso Libre* migrant shelter in Guadalajara, Mexico
- Migrants-in-transit starting asylum process (target population)

### BEFORE:

First-time fieldwork placement for Social Work students completing summer block

### AFTER: STRENGTHENED PARTNERSHIP (SHELTER + UNIVERSITY)

- Dedicated research team in the collaborative development of group-mode for psychosocial support to migrants
- Mutual understanding of each others’ assets
- Integration of evidence-based group work practices
- Continual support via yearly fieldwork placements

## GROUP TYPE: OPEN, PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL

**Target population:** longer-term (1-1.5 month) residents of *FM4 Paso Libre* shelter

**Characteristics:** migrants-in-transit starting asylum process, not sponsored by *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, isolated, disrupted familial and support systems, trauma histories, sociopolitical barriers to stability, lack of familiarity with psychotherapy and group interventions

**Purpose:** provide psychosocial intervention to individuals while on their migration journey



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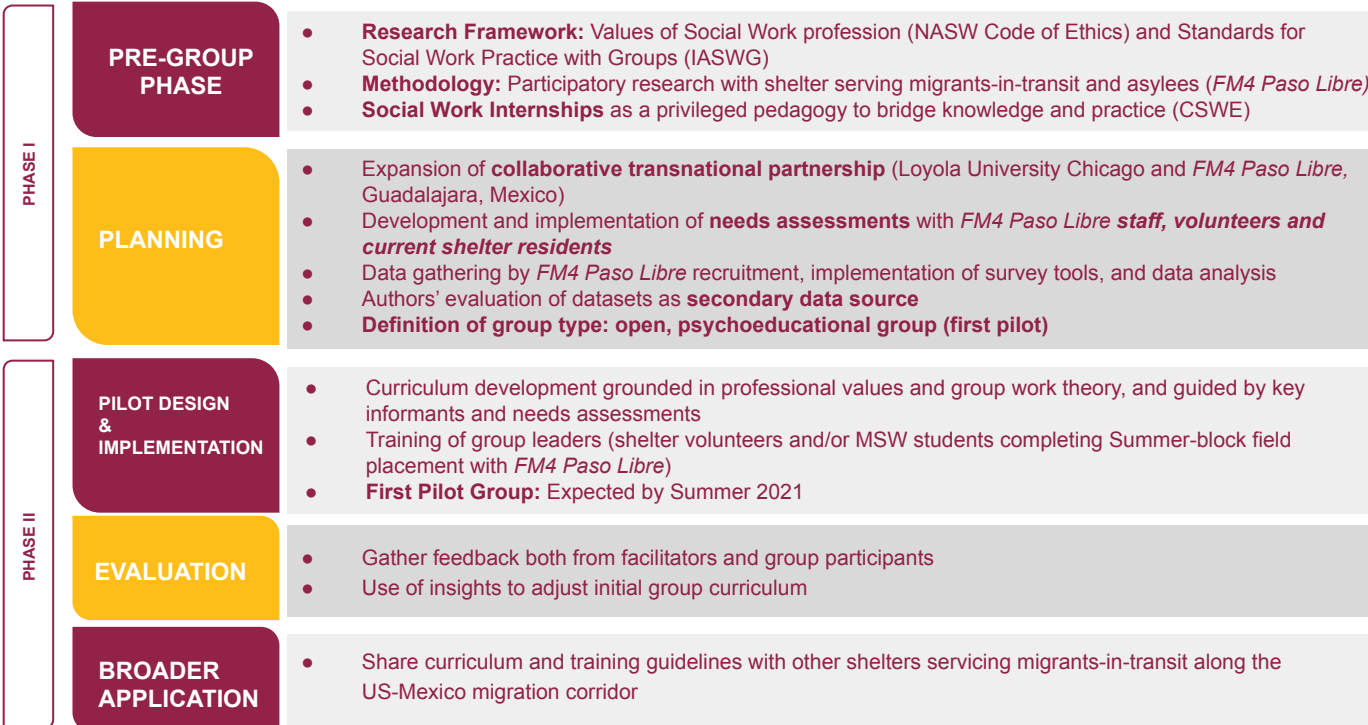
# Migrants-in-Transit: A Group Work Intervention Model (Phase I)

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## PROPOSED MODEL



## CONCLUSIONS

Phase I of this research **highlighted the power of transnational collaborations** between academia and non-profit organizations servicing migrants, resulting in the **conceptualization of an open, psychoeducational group** to aid asylum applicants at *FM4 Paso Libre*. During Phase 2, the authors will proceed to the development of a group curriculum and will continue collaborating with *FM4 Paso Libre* to coordinate the implementation and evaluation of the first pilot group.

## LIMITATIONS

Main limitation associated with COVID-19:

- Delayed implementation of pilot group (now scheduled for Summer of 2021)
- Heightened reliance on partner-site for data collection in pre-group phase
- Authors make use of secondary data vs. on-the-ground data collection
- Residents at time of survey implementation were of heightened vulnerability and mixed migration status
- Indirect pilot implementation by authors--training Summer 2021 interns versus direct application of model via internship

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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