

Dr Ross White

KEYNOTE

Title: *'ACTing to promote the mental health of refugees and asylum seekers'*

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that there are currently over 22 million refugees across the globe. Mental health difficulties have been shown to be elevated in asylum seeking and refugee (ASR) populations. Social adversity in the form of 'daily stressors' (such as lack of access to basic resources, isolation, lack of safety and security, family violence) has been highlighted as an important determinant of common mental disorders (such as depression and anxiety disorders) experienced by ASRs. Concerns have been raised about the medicalization of social adversity faced by displaced populations. A range of low-intensity psychological interventions have been developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). The Self Help Plus (SH+) intervention is one such example. It is a novel trans-diagnostic, group-based, guided self-help intervention based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. This keynote will reflect on the development of the intervention and research that has been undertaken to evaluate its efficacy in Northern Uganda with South Sudanese refugees, and an EU Horizon2020 project that has recently commenced to evaluate its efficacy in sites across the EU.