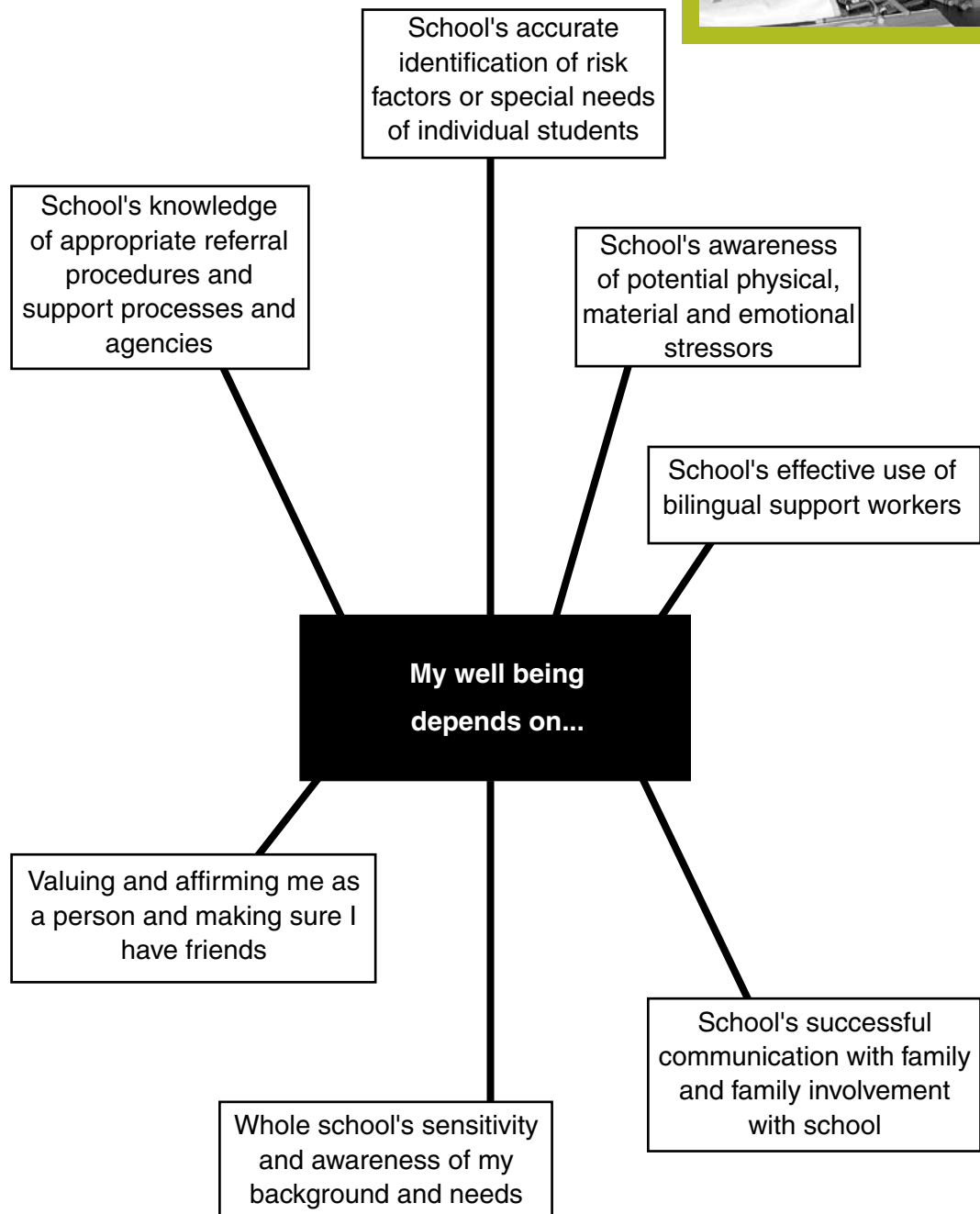
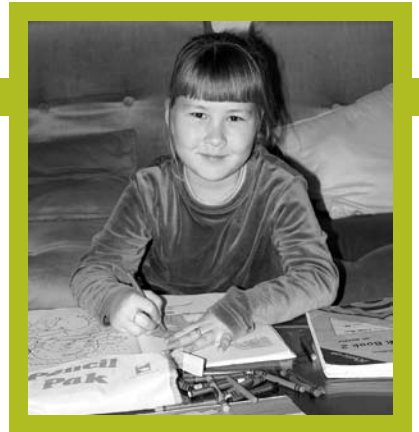


Section 4: identifying and managing at-risk students



Meeting the social and emotional needs of students

There are many social and emotional needs that need to be met for all students. Students from a refugee background in particular, however, are likely to have additional needs as a result of both pre-settlement and re-settlement trauma and stress. Pre-settlement factors are those which affected students prior to their arrival in New Zealand. (see Section 1). Re-settlement factors are those which are on-going areas of risk or stress at home or at school which affect students.

In spite of good preventative policies and support in school, some children will require more attention because they are not learning or because of their behaviour at home or at school. Early assessment of children with difficulties in behaviour or learning is important to ensure that the children make maximum progress at school and to ensure that they receive appropriate and adequate support.

Student profiles

Each student should have a profile on record. This can be built from a number of sources, including the *Knowing the Learner* sheet, (see Section 2), on-going discussion with the students, other agencies' reports, records of progress and support interventions, teacher observations and family discussions. A possible profile template can be found on the next page.

Profiles should be:

- managed by the school's refugee co-ordinator
- kept in one place for ease of appropriate access
- regularly reviewed and updated
- used to provide a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of the refugee students in the school

Identifying stresses

The factors that may result in stress for students may be in one or more of the following categories which may overlap: cultural loss, material deprivation, mental/emotional health, physical dislocation, physical trauma/health, family issues.

A checklist to help assess which apply to the individual student and to monitor how these are being addressed is part of the profile on the next 2 pages.

Removing or reducing stresses

It is important to remember that stresses may be caused by a number of factors. The causes of students' distress or challenging behaviours must be carefully determined, and where possible cross checked with the perceptions of a **bilingual support worker**. Teachers may make inaccurate assumptions or judgements about students' behaviour without this careful investigation.

There is seldom one simple link between a symptom and a cause of distress. For example, aggression may be related to many of the factors above such as confusion and frustration in school, desire to protect a peer or sibling, past experiences of violence, domestic violence or abuse, anxiety, lack of knowledge about how to relate appropriately to adults and peers in the new context. The possibility of direct or hidden bullying or other harassment at school should always be considered. Creating and maintaining a safe and supportive environment is a whole school responsibility.

Indicators of stress in students

Children may show stress in a number of ways. What should alert us to the fact that a child might need additional support? Indicators include one or more of the following.

- The child is learning more slowly than other comparable learners in all areas of the curriculum, and is failing to meet the targets established through the Individual Programme Plan (see Section 3)
- Attendance problems – lateness, may have frequent absences from school or be missing classes, or may drop out of school
- Social issues – difficulties in making or keeping friends, withdrawn, isolated
- Behavioural difficulties – aggression and anger outbursts, disruptive behaviour, failure to follow classroom rules, inappropriate interactions with opposite sex
- Mental health issues – poor concentration, restlessness, inability to follow classroom routines, over anxiety, clinging
- Physical problems – bedwetting, poor bladder control, extreme tiredness

Adapted from *Into the Whirlwind* by Naomi Richman Trentham Books 1998, Westview House

Assessments and reports

All assessments for identification of needs and possible referrals should be done in conjunction with bilingual support. See page 9 for a job description of a bilingual support worker.

Reports should:

- describe the circumstances and academic and emotional needs of the student
- identify the issue and stresses for the student (at home and school)
- develop a plan to address the issues and some strategies to ensure the plan is followed through

<p>Record of school contacts</p> <p>Our school refugee co-ordinator is _____</p> <p>Student profiles are kept _____</p> <p>Other school staff to contact for social/emotional support:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Our bilingual support workers are:</p> <p>Name: _____ (community and language) _____</p> <p>Name: _____ (community and language) _____</p> <p>Name: _____ (community and language) _____</p>
--

Student: _____

Date: _____

Checklist: indicators for at-risk students	Dated comments / checks
<p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural dislocation (loss of language, familiar culture and religion) and difficulties in acculturation • harassment (religious or racial) at school or in the community 	
<p>Material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial stress, difficulties in meeting school and life expenses • changes in socio-economic status • inadequate or overcrowded housing 	
<p>Mental/emotional trauma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of caregivers, friends, relatives • exposure to war zone, sudden loss of home • experience of abuse (physical, sexual, rape, torture) • direct active participation in fighting • mental health issue 	
<p>Dislocation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in refugee camp for extended time (2+ years) • internal dislocation in own country • frequent or on-going relocations before and /or after resettlement, including schooling 	
<p>Physical health (impacting on learning)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permanent injury or disability (hearing loss, vision impairment, brain injury, scarring, loss of limb or movement, poor dental health, malnutrition effects) • inaccurate age documentation • on-going health issues – e.g. TB 	
<p>Family stresses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no guardian • not with birth family/usual caregivers • caregivers not of parental generation • low educational level of caregivers • caregivers with mental health issues • taking on family responsibilities/adult roles (interpreting etc) • family violence • no longer with family of original arrival in NZ • financial stresses 	
<p>Educational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no schooling (no literacy in first language) • interrupted schooling • schooling not in mother tongue • no time at Centre for Refugee Education (Mangere) • challenging behaviour – avoidance of work • withdrawn behaviour • poor progress – cognitive delay?? 	
<p>Social interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developmental social level below peers • isolated in class • not participating in school activities • no effective relationships with peers/friends • difficulties with opposite gender 	

Recommendations for action:

Referring students for additional assistance

What do we do if we identify a need or an issue for a student?

The school needs to know:

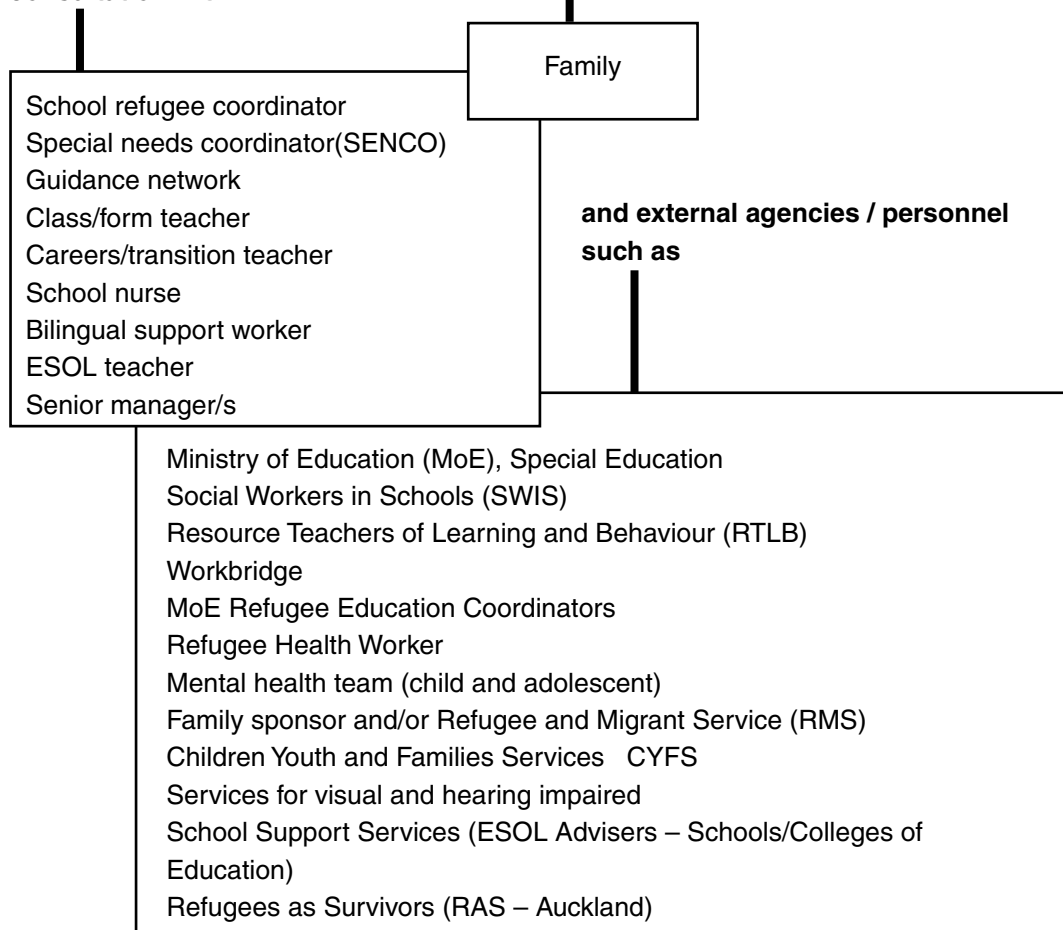
- what types of support are appropriate
- how to provide this support within the school

OR

- where and how to make a referral or a request for additional support

There are many levels at which schools need to support students. The approach which the most successful schools use is holistic. This means that the whole student is taken into account and the whole school develops and uses systems and approaches which address the needs of the student at every level. It also means that the refugee coordinator in the school is aware of the different types of support available for different levels of need.

School personnel who might be involved in meeting individual needs in consultation with



It might be useful to make up a chart of these people and agencies, and fill it in with the local contact names of the agencies you might get support from. There is a lot of help available!

Who can help with what?

This model of three different levels of need describes what types of support the school can be providing and accessing at each level. There are also print resources listed in each section of this booklet.

The following page explains the protocols for accessing additional assistance from the Ministry of Education, Special Education, in particular for schools enrolling students from a refugee background for the first time, or those who would like to review their procedures and update new staff on meeting the needs of students from refugee backgrounds.

A checklist

Level 1 Main needs – ESOL main focus + general adjustment and on-going support at school

<p>School provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff preparation/on-going professional development • student orientation programme • peer support • accurate assessment • a student profile • an individual programme plan • ESOL programme • possible bi-lingual tutor and a support worker • pathway planning support and mentoring systems 	<p>Assistance available from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee Education Coordinator (MoE) • Special Education (MoE) • ESOL/NESB Adviser • internal experts in school • Careers Service • SENCO (primary/intermediate) • School Refugee Co-ordinators • Guidance Counsellors
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Level 2 Main needs – ESOL + moderate additional needs – (learning and behavioural - some health needs)

<p>School provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a risk or needs assessment and report • a bilingual special needs assessment (in consultation with ESOL/NESB adviser) • a behaviour/learning plan • a social skills training programme 	<p>Assistance available from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible Funding Pool (MoE) • Refugee Education Coordinators (MoE regions) • School Support Services (Schools/ Colleges of Education) • Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs) • Social Workers in Schools (SWIS) • Health agencies
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Level 3 Main needs – ESOL + high needs – severe and challenging behaviour, high mental health needs/trauma, physical or cognitive disability

<p>School provides or accesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a bilingual special needs assessment • a record of concerns/incidents and interventions to date • health records 	<p>Assistance available from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education (MoE) • ORRS (on-going resourcing) • Mental Health teams (Hospital Boards and other agencies) • support agencies for the hearing and visually impaired (in addition to support from Levels 1 & 2)
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Protocols for Assisting Students from a refugee background: Ministry of Education, Special Education (Protocols are available from Refugee Education Co-ordinators)

The Ministry of Education, Special Education has developed a set of protocols for assisting schools with the needs of students from a refugee background. The first two protocols correspond with the first level of needs of students from refugee backgrounds. The third protocol corresponds with the moderate and high levels of need.

Protocol 1 aims to support the orientation of students to New Zealand. It describes the procedures for supporting **quota students** from a refugee background and their families at first point of entry to New Zealand.

Protocol 2 aims to support students whose ability to learn may be affected by their experiences, either pre-settlement or after re-settlement. It identifies the whole school support available for schools receiving quota students from a refugee background. Under Protocol 2, Special Education personnel are available to:

- conduct staff meetings to provide information on the needs of students from refugee backgrounds
- help schools identify potential triggers for trauma
- help schools review their policies and procedures (as described in Section 1)

Protocol 3 identifies the reasons for referral of individual students for specialist assistance from a variety of agencies.

Schools who wish to access support through Protocol 2 or 3 should contact either Ministry of Education, Special Education or the local Refugee Education Coordinator (MoE)

Case Study

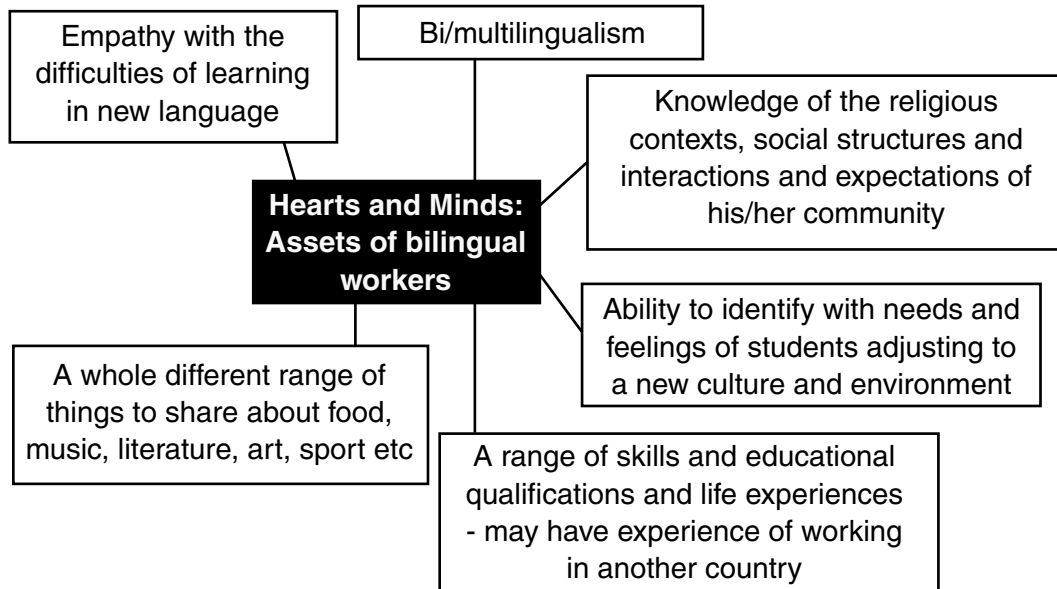
Background: P is a 9 year old Afghani boy, born in Pakistan of refugee parents and separated from his siblings at age 4. He has a dysfunctional, fragmented family and past trauma includes physical violence. With little peer contact and frequent moves, he has poor social skills. He had no prior education or exposure to English before arrival with his mother only. The family have little contact with their community in New Zealand. He was introduced to school routines and the education system at Mangere Centre for Refugee Education.

At school: P is the only refugee student in the school and has had adjustment difficulties. The school had limited understanding of his academic, social and emotional needs. He was placed in a junior class to meet his learning needs, but had no contact with age peers. The school seemed to expect refugees to fit in and be grateful for their new lives. There was no positive family contact with the school other than complaints about his behaviour.

Behaviour: P demonstrated aggression to teachers and children, running away, defensiveness, lies, isolated playground behaviour, anxious habituated behaviours (hair pulling and skin picking) possible post traumatic stress, nightmares, bedwetting, avoidance of non-preferred tasks, refusal to stay within behaviour boundaries at home and school, poorly developed concept of others, resistance to mother.

Plan to address needs: School called on Ministry of Education, Refugee Education Coordinator, (REC) initially to ask for child's removal from school. REC arranged a meeting with mother and school to describe concerns and behaviours, with an interpreter. Special Education worked with school and family to target behaviours to change and to monitor playground behaviour. IEP set up, with RTLB contact as well. School staff meeting on refugee needs with Special Education and REC. Situation recognised as being at Level 2, using Protocol 2 and likely to need long term monitoring and support for both school and child.

Bilingual support workers: roles, requirements and job descriptions



There are many reasons for employing bilingual support staff.

Bilingual support staff have a number of distinct assets.

- They understand what it is like to have to develop a dual identity – one part of which has to maintain their places in their own communities and one to take a place in the community to which those born outside New Zealand need to acculturate.
- They are able to mediate learning for those students with whom they share a language.
- They can smooth the communication pathways not only between the parent/caregiver community and the child and the school but also within the school.

This can mean:

- giving explanations of school systems, curriculum and assessment, learning pathways, extra-curricular activities and behavioural expectations to the parents/ caregivers
- anticipating or ensuring early detection of school based problems with or for students, so that problems can be averted or minimized
- picking up early warning signs of emotional problems and working with school guidance personnel to support students
- suggesting culturally appropriate resolutions and/or negotiating with specialist referral agencies
- sharing cultural information about the community with the school, at mini professional development sessions
- working one to one or in small groups with students to support social, emotional and academic development
- helping maintain effective school-community communication

Suggestion. Take the time to do a skills inventory with bilingual support staff – many are likely to have hidden or undeclared talents.

Differences between bilingual tutors and bilingual support workers

The roles of bilingual tutors and bilingual support staff are distinct, even though they may in some cases be the same person. The main role of a bilingual tutor is to help students with their learning in and through English. The role of a bilingual support worker is to help with student – school – community liaison. There will be times when there is considerable overlap, but a tutor's time should be focussed on the classroom.

Selecting and appointing bilingual support workers

Bilingual support workers must:

- have the confidence and trust of the community – i.e. have the mandate of the community
- be able to respect the protocols of confidentiality
- have the skills to interact with the educational and wider communities
- be able to determine when and where to refer students when appropriate, in consultation with the school and family when necessary

Appointments should be advertised and interviews conducted. Hours, holidays, and rates of pay should be clearly specified. Conditions and a job description as well as protocols of operating should be written down and discussed verbally prior to appointment.

Basic requirements for working in a school

On initially joining the staff bilingual support workers need:

- induction, befriending
- formal introductions to whole staff and individually to key personnel, senior management, RTLB, different teams in school, BOT, PTA
- a negotiated job description and clear lines of responsibility and reporting
- clear explanations of school systems (rewards/discipline procedures)
- opportunities to observe typical classrooms in a variety of subject areas

At later stages bilingual support workers (and tutors) should be considered for and included in professional development opportunities.

Bilingual support staff also need:

- access to copies of whole school timetable
- a workplace – including a room to work with students at arranged times
- copies of school calendar (special events, PD days etc)
- access to copies of relevant school policies
- keys and access to a phone

Supportive ways of working

- Set up an email loop with workers from different area/schools.
- Set up a telephone chain for important school and community meetings.
- Meet regularly in a cluster with the local MoE Refugee Education Coordinator.

Identifying and responding to needs: working with guidance personnel

Many teachers in charge of students from a refugee background at primary and intermediate schools, and guidance staff at secondary schools have noticed that students from refugee backgrounds may not access their assistance very readily. The reasons for this can be quite complex. The counselling model is unfamiliar to some students, and they may hesitate to seek help for many reasons.

The questions that need to be asked in order to support students' social and emotional needs might be those such as the following. In finding answers to these, schools will have to consider the cross-cultural competencies of their own personnel, possible resource people from the refugee and host communities and bilingual support workers. They may also need to draw on from the professional education sector – counselling associations, School Support Services, and Special Education personnel with experience in working with students from refugee backgrounds. Some of the answers can also be found by referring to other sections of the Refugee Handbook.

Questions	Possible responses
How can guidance staff create opportunities to build students' trust and confidence as a source of help?	Introduce yourself to the students. Take the opportunity to talk to them in passing. Approach them to ask if they're alright, rather than waiting for them to come to you. Build your own cross-cultural capital and know about the backgrounds of different groups. Learn a greeting in their language.
What sorts of manifestations of problems might we see and when do we know if they're serious?	Check the indicators. Discuss the issue with experienced specialists. Avoid making assumptions. Build your own expertise through research. Work with the bilingual personnel.
How do students from a refugee background and other marginalised groups present with issues which might need the combined expertise of guidance and bilingual staff to sort out?	Discuss the issues and test your perceptions with people from the student's cultural background. Hold small group discussions with groups of students from the culture to raise the issues. They are often very perceptive and many have stated their preference for working on these issues in small groups, rather than individually.
How do we know whether a problem is related to learning stress, emotional stress, external stress or a combination of two or more?	Spend time talking to the students, gathering information from a variety of sources and observing the student in different settings.
What are some ways to "put out small fires" (-deal with problems before they become too serious)?	Ensure that school policies and procedures promote the physical and emotional safety and happiness of students at school. Display the photos of people students can go to if they have a problem. Train peer mediators and anti-harassment student leaders.
What do we do if we suspect a serious problem?	Work with the school to familiarise the parent communities with ways of operating in New Zealand culture, to anticipate issues that may arise and to understand their viewpoints. Know who and when and where to make a referral. Access bilingual help if possible.