

# ESSENTIAL ASPECTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WORK WITH THIRD COUNTRIES' CITIZENS IN THE SPECIAL CENTER FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION OF FOREIGNERS – SOFIA

Katya Stefanova, Silviya Stoyanova

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**Abstract.** *The current report presents the practical experience of the psychologists working with illegal foreigners in Bulgaria in the Special Center for Temporary Accommodation of Foreigners /SCTAF/-Sofia. It is focused on the analysis of the specific needs and characteristics of the target group; basic psychological methods and specific techniques of work in the Special center.*

*At the SCTAF are accommodated third countries' citizens with imposing coercive administrative measures, for whom there are obstacles for immediate deportation or expulsion from Bulgaria. In this kind of institutions there is tension and negative mood among residents. The reasons for these obstacles are the actual situation of limited movement of people inside the center, the different ethnic group of foreigners forced to live together and the vast cultural differences among them. Sometimes the accommodation is prolonged and the centers are overpopulated, especially in the current situation. Foreigners feel uncertainty about their future life prospects. They are frequently experiencing negative emotions, fantasies and fears. The sense of distrust and suspicion grows and that makes them ready to react defensively and aggressively. In the centers often occur crises situations and riots. That is why the job of the psychologist is dynamic and prevention oriented. Face to face contact with both foreigners and staff is important to be continuous.*

*Psychological support in SCTAF most often takes the form of individual counseling. It is crucial that the consultant is genuine and empathic. He needs to percept the client as an individual with its own cultural and ethnic characteristics. The process of psychological support is oriented towards finding a personal identity and meaning for the client. According to the feedback we judge that even short-term counseling has a positive effect if the client has felt attention, understanding and concern about his case.*

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