

Hello everyone and thank you for inviting me to this webinar, I am honored to be part of it.

My name is Giancarlo Zannini and I am a clinical and developmental psychologist and a cognitive behavioral psychotherapist.

I am helping develop the Including Children Affected by Migration Programme working with refugee children and their families in Italy.

However, I am finding a big increase in the need for psycho-social support for many children as a result of the pandemic

From a clinical point of view I have been observing, in my general practice, a strong increase in requests for psychological support and for psychotherapies, for a year now. Specifically, we are talking about an increase of about 80% for adults and 60% for children.

Focusing on children, the pathologies found concern depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, phobias, obsessive compulsive disorders and finally, more rarely, post traumatic stress disorders.

When I look into the causes of these disorders, I find a complex of emotional states tending to fear, but including issues related to alienation caused by quarantines, lockdowns, and including estrangement due to the experience of teaching now carried out on-line

Therefore, if from a physical point of view, the children were not particularly affected by the pandemic and the devastating effects of covid, from a psychological point of view they seem to have suffered in an important way from the consequences of separation as a result of the safety measures adopted to prevent contagion.

And this is where we can find the focus of this webinar, namely restoring inclusion for these children and their families.

As a result of the pandemic many children in need in Europe and around the world have had to live with increased exclusion from their life spheres, especially from school and socially finding themselves living in a situation of alienation that reminds us of the status of Children Affected by Migration. This has led to a series of important issues from an emotional and cognitive point of view for many children which are similar to those found in Children Affected by Migration. They can teach us much!

So we can treat this situation as a crisis, or we can see it as an opportunity, to stimulate empathy and understanding about the needs of this increased number of excluded children.

Teachers, parents and many children have first hand experience of the social and emotional disruption caused by increased isolation and broken relationships. We should use this awareness to sensitize the consciences of their communities, and leverage the personal experience of exclusion they are experiencing due to the pandemic, so they not only understand in a deeper way the discomfort and pain of feeling excluded, but demand action to provide the social and emotional support needed to restore inclusion and return to learning for this increased number of suffering children.

Thank you very much for your attention I greet you with the motto that has characterized the ICAM programme: forever Convivencia!