

“IT’S REALLY  
EXCITING  
TO HELP  
SOMEONE  
WHO’S BEEN  
THROUGH SO  
MUCH”

# STARTTS

## SERVICE FOR THE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF TORTURE AND TRAUMA SURVIVORS

The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) is a non-profit organisation supporting refugees, migrants and culturally and linguistically diverse. WentWest has commissioned STARTTS since 2015 to implement culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) mental health literacy and suicide prevention programs for refugees, asylum seekers and other diverse communities in Western Sydney.

Atur\* is a Bi-Cultural Mental Health Project Officer for Arabic-Speaking Communities at STARTTS. The following story is in her own words.

I work on the suicide prevention project work plan. My day-to-day work includes hosting training sessions for community leaders, community workers, organisations and volunteers.

We run weekly psychosocial activities, and I also work one-on-one with clients doing case management and evaluations of the activities that we run.

The psychosocial activities are so important for the community because it’s a space for them to come together and take themselves out of isolation. They meet a lot of new people here. They get to work on their mental health, and it’s also such a happy space for them. They look forward to it on a weekly basis, and you can see the success of the programs through the evaluations and the focus groups that we run.

I had a client who came into our group a few years ago. She was a refugee, came from a torture and trauma background, and had no family here. She was on her own. She was very quiet in the sessions when we used to

run them. I used to find myself approaching her more because she was isolating herself. We got talking a little bit, and she started to share some issues that were happening to her. I was able to find out why she wasn’t including herself within the group. Through that, I was able to refer her to STARTTS counselling.

Now, she has been in our group for almost four years, and she continues to participate. Each time, she advocates for the group, and she’s really grateful for the services that STARTTS has provided her through counselling, social support groups and psychosocial activities.

It’s really exciting to help someone who’s been through so much and seeing them thank you with a big smile on their face and being really gratified with what they’ve received from us as an organisation is really rewarding.

For more information about how WentWest supports Western Sydney, visit [www.wentwest.com.au](http://www.wentwest.com.au).